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CHAPTER X.

A HAUNTED HOUSE.

A VISITOR came to Windygates in those unpropitious circumstances, and in the end of autumn. It was a very innocent, ignorant visitor, an orphan girl not yet in her teens, whose dead mother had been Lady Windygates's dearest friend in their youth.

Little Anaple Boyd was, it was feared, going the same road which her mother had travelled before her. She had been an exceedingly delicate child, and there was reason to suspect the seeds of consumption were sown in her constitution. Her usual home was with kindred in the Canongate, Edinburgh, but at Lady Windygates's earnest request Anaple had been brought to Windygates to try what country air—even as cold as that of Windygates towards the close of September—would do for the child. Our ancestors were not less hardy in their medical prescriptions than in everything else. To be sure, the air was to be supplemented with an abundance of sweet milk, newly laid eggs, chicken broth, calves'-foot jelly, and the experienced nursing of her mother's friend.

It may seem that Lady Windygates would not shine in the office which she had assumed, but that would be a great mistake; she watched over Anaple with the utmost care and gentleness, from the hour when she administered the patient's glass of rum and milk in the morning, to the other hour when Lady Windygates tucked Anaple in for the night, with a worsted stocking round her throat, and a basin of bread berry (hot wine, bread, and sugar) for

her supper at bed-time. There was something in the delicate health, and in the peculiarly inoffensive, artless disposition of the little invalid, who had paid more than one visit to Windygates, that called forth the best traits in Lady Windygates's nature, and there was a great deal of sterling stuff in the redoubtable little woman. She was quite fond of Anaple, and was inclined to resent the fact that young Windygates, who had been wont to show a great liking for children, took hardly any notice of the visitor on this occasion.

Anaple was in dress a small edition of her hostess in her long-waisted frock, the ruffles at her elbows, the white neckerchief crossed over her breast, the white muslin apron, the gay pockets which Lady Windygates had patched for her, the little mob cap over the smooth mouse-coloured cropped hair. She used to sit with her two pink-and-white cheeks and her over-large and bright eyes, holding her picture-book, or her doll, or her sampler, and bearing Lady Windygates company in her white-panelled parlour. Very good company the woman, fain to be diverted from her perplexed and anxious thoughts, found the unconscious child, who prattled to her without fear, and with a simple confidence in her patience and good-will which in itself bred the best will.

'Madam,' said Anaple, when the two friends were thus *tête-à-tête* on a stormy day which precluded all exercise except for the young and strong, or the waifs who were forced to meet the storm; 'Madam, I can work in that stitch as well as mark letters. I would like to work a footstool for you to keep in remembrance of me—that you've been so good to.'

'That would be very good of you, my dear,' said Lady Windygates, with a passing pang at the words, 'but there is time enough to think of it, as you are to come back in summer, and next winter, too, if you do not mind the cold. For my part, I like the keen, clear cold of Windygates far better than the smothering reek of a big town.'

'So do I,' said the child eagerly; 'I like everything about Windygates, even the wind that sighs in the chimney at night, and the garden gate that creaks on its hinges.'

'I'm glad of that, Anaple, and you'll ask your friends to send you here whenever they can, so that you see I shall not need a remembrance of you, though that is not to say that I will not be proud and pleased to have a specimen of your handiwork.'

'I do not know of your not needing a remembrance of me,

Lady Windygates,' said the little girl, with a sort of simple solemnity, showing herself very much impressed and yet not at all agitated by what she was going to say; 'Auntie Euphann calls my cough a kirk-yard cough, and they all speak about my mother dying young, though she had not begun to dwine at my age.'

'Never mind what they say,' exclaimed Lady Windygates hastily. 'The ordering of the universe and the calculating the duration of men and women's lives is none of their business.'

'No, Madam,' said Anaple quietly, 'but they mean no ill, and they are very kind to me when I take very bad turns. I do not mind them, I just say my prayers and leave my life or death to our Father in Heaven. It must be very bonnie and lowie¹ up yonder,' added the child wistfully, 'where there are neither rude winds, nor wild beasts, nor colds and coughs, where the Lord is.'

'That's true,' said Lady Windygates emphatically; 'and if we look to Him and do our duty here He'll take us there safe enough in His own good time, whether it be late or early. We can leave our outgoings and incomings in His hands without thinking too much about them; such thoughts are hardly fit for bairns, and He has drawn a veil over the times and seasons, even when they are to do with hoary heads.'

'Yes, Madam.'

There was a little silence while Anaple hemmed her handkerchief with an ardent desire to do her duty and win the approval of Lady Windygates, as an earnest of the 'will done' of the great Lord and Master.

'Madam,' began Anaple again, 'I did not ken that you had another visitor in the house.'

'Another visitor!' exclaimed Lady Windygates, with a start; 'what do you mean, Anaple? There is no other visitor.'

'Oh, yes, Madam, you must have forgotten!' said Anaple confidently; 'or may-be the fine lady only comes for the day, and you think I mean visitors that bide the night.'

'What fine lady?' inquired the mistress of Windygates. She pulled the thread she was spinning so tightly that it snapped in two places, and then, instead of tying the ends together in a weaver's knot, she pushed back her chair and folded her hands in her lap, while the least little shiver ran over her. Then she said a little sternly, 'You are a good bairn, but even good bairns sometimes tell stories; their fancies run away with them, but I will

¹ Sheltered.

not permit it, for your own sake. There has been no fine lady here either by day or by night lately, that I know of, and there could not be without my knowledge.'

'I am not telling a story,' said Anaple, rather in accents of meek reproach than of indignant protest, so that her accuser felt as if she had struck a defenceless lamb a wanton blow. A tear gathered in the child's big lustrous eyes and fell on her needle, ready to rust it if she had not wiped it carefully away; 'I would not tell stories, least of all to you, Lady Windygates. There has been a fine lady here twice lately—whatever she may come for—if it be not to see you, which is very strange. I met her in the gallery yesterday, opposite the garden door, and I saw her this morning passing out of the dining-room as I was going downstairs. I would have asked you about her before, but you ken you were throng last night and to-day, making out the lists of goods to be sent for to Pitblair, and looking over everybody's winter clothing in case it needed renewing.'

Lady Windygates was silent for a moment in troubled thought. Braehead had never spoken to Anaple. Young Windygates, in place of occupying himself with the child, so as to render it at all probable that he should give her any share of the confidence which he had denied to his mother, had neglected Anaple to such an extent that Lady Windygates had been hurt by it.

Lady Windygates had the greatest repugnance to binding herself in any way to the support of the supernatural in her son's history, though as a woman who acknowledged the existence of the supernatural in other regions she could not discredit it utterly. She was most averse to spreading the influence by supposing for an instant, even in her own mind, that his experience could extend to the poor lamb Anaple; if she were to become a ghost-seer, who could be safe from the horrible infliction? Above all things it was necessary to protect a delicate, sensitive child like Anaple, who was under Lady Windygates's special care, from the injurious suspicion that she had seen something 'uncanny.'

'Will you tell me what your fine lady was like, my bairn?' she said at last with forced calmness and cheerfulness; 'I am anxious to hear what is your notion of a fine lady. It is just possible,' she went on with affected carelessness, 'that some one of the Dalrymples or the Charteris's,' mentioning her nearest neighbours, 'may have been over here when I was out of the way, and may have gone away without liking to trouble me.' The

spot of wintry red in her cheek deepened at the subterfuge. She did not deceive herself; she was sensible it was a mere pretence to disarm any previous doubt which might lurk even in the child's mind. But to think she, Lady Windygates, should be guilty of the pretence when she had hardly done warning Anaple not to tell stories!

'No, it was not any of the Dalrymples or the Charteris's,' said Anaple, shaking her head in a decisive manner. 'I have seen them all, and I should ken them if I saw them again. It was not like anybody I have ever seen before.'

'Dear me! Anaple, the lady must have been very kinspeckle!'¹ exclaimed Lady Windygates in an affectation of rallying the teller of the tale.

'She was kinspeckle!' said Anaple simply. 'For one thing, she was black-haired and black-browed, far more than anybody hereabout. She wore her hair in a different fashion, and her mantle and hat were of another cut; and oh! Madam, she must have been of the first quality, for you said to me only the other day that a lady's laces were often the costliest things that belonged to her. Now this lady had not only the brawest lace round her neckerchief, she had it trimming everything she wore.'

'That will do, my dear,' said Lady Windygates hastily, with a sigh that sounded like a groan. 'I fail to recognise your description! That is, I cannot tell who she may be—further than that she is not one of my acquaintances; a visitor, as you say, not of mine—of some friend of mine, maybe. But stop, Anaple, did you speak to her?' asked Lady Windygates breathlessly.

'No, Madam,' answered the child in surprise. 'I did not take it upon me. The first time I was too far off, and too much taken by surprise even for curtseying. But this morning I knew what I should do, so I curtseyed as low as the cat would let me. I was carrying Graythrums in my arms, and I suppose he was frightened at the sight of a stranger, for he howled and struggled to get down. I was black affronted at his behaviour, and the lady looked over my head and took no notice. Would she be angry with Graythrums, or would she think it forward of me to curtsey?' asked Anaple anxiously. 'She was very grand and proud-looking.'

'Never mind what she thought,' said Lady Windygates abruptly. 'Go and play with puss again, it is not good for a bairn like you to sit so long over your seam; and when I think of it,

¹ Conspicuous.

Anaple, you need not speak to anybody else of this fine lady and her visits, either now or if you should happen to come across her again. It is not mannerly of her, whoever she is, to come here uninvited and not to wait on me,' said Lady Windygates with a defiant gleam in her blue eyes. 'I do not care that people should know anybody takes such liberties with me and my house. You are but a bairn; still you're a sensible little woman, Anaple, and you know how when a whisper goes round clashes arise; above all, you'll not breathe a word of this to young Windygates. He is not altogether recovered from his bad illness in Paris. He is not fit for company of any kind, or in a condition to be plagued with the fear of their turning up at odd moments—not to say it would vex him to hear of a liberty being taken with me.'

Anaple was considerably mystified, but she answered 'Yes, Madam,' with the unbounded faith of youth, and with the full intention of keeping her promise; 'and oh! Lady Windygates,' she went on to say, 'I'm wae to see Allan looking so white and dowie. He used to want me to play hide-and-seek last year, and carry me on his shoulder when I was tired, but he's tired himself now! Only, as he has no cough,' added the child with the quick instinct of a gentle heart, 'and as his mother, instead of dying young in a decline, is the most active lady on the Deerwater, he'll be better soon. Yes, I'll do your bidding, Madam, but you must remember,' said the child in a puzzled voice, 'that Ritchie or Jenny would see the lady when they let her in. Indeed, I'm almost sure that your son must have met her face to face this morning, for he came round the gallery in the opposite direction not three minutes after she had gone.'

'Never you mind,' repeated Lady Windygates at once peremptorily and soothingly. 'Leave Allan and the servants to manage their own business, and do you hold your tongue.'

'Yes, Madam,' submitted the old-fashioned little maiden obediently, though she opened her large bright eyes wider and wider.

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER WITNESS.

THERE was a well-known and much respected visitor in addition to Anaple and her fine lady at Windygates in the course of the following week. Instead of another child or another fine lady, it was a man venerable in years, and not fine in that sense. He was an aged minister of the Gospel, too old to preach or to serve tables. He had a small patrimony, and, having been gently born, like a large proportion of the Scotch ministers of that day, he counted kindred in different degrees of nearness with the most of the lairds' families on the Deerwater. But it was not this fact alone which rendered Mr. Arthur Hyndford an honoured guest when he made his annual peregrination through the district. He was treated with a respect, amounting to reverence, not merely because of his singular nobility of character and holiness of life, but because of the terrible trials he had passed through before William of Orange and 'Carolinal Carstairs' restored religious liberty to Scotland. Mr. Hyndford was a very old man ; but the halo with which he was invested in his youth, when he was hunted like a partridge on the mountains—a mark for the fierce persecution of Lauderdale, Claverhouse, and Dalziel, glad to find any foe, above the rank of a peasant, who resisted the King's decree and was worthy of their shot and steel, or of hanging by the neck in the Grass-market—when his home was the wild moors and mosses, rugged watercourses, bleak, sea-bound caves, and thorny inland thickets of a country the climate of which was often as inclement as its government was tyrannical and relentless. Hyndford had survived the long winter of adversity, in which he had known and kept company with Pen the prophet, Cameron, Renwick, Cargill. These were men who, in scourging gales and biting frosts, when they were wrapped round with mountain mists, when they had the thunder roaring and the lightning flashing about their unsheltered heads, while the tramp of the enemy's horse and the rattle of the dragoons' sabres were for ever in the fugitives' ears, believed themselves called upon to hold still more dreadful single combats with the foul fiend himself, the malignant devil and his fallen angels, with the weakness of their own quivering flesh, with sheeted ghosts gibbering at mortal man's misery, with the awful burden of

prophesying the woes which were yet to come on an unrepentant and doomed generation.

In the Indian summer of Arthur Hyndford's extreme old age he was as unworldly, as devoted to the service of God and man, while he was infinitely gentler than he had been in the days of his hard warfare. Little wonder that he was regarded as three-fourths a saint by his relatives and friends, and that it was like a blessing on them and their children, on their basket and their store, for him to consent to abide a week under each of their roofs.

Lady Windygates was particularly pleased to have her share of good Mr. Hyndford's sojourn by the Deerwater, and to be permitted to minister to his comfort by seizing the opportunity, since he was the last of his race, and had outlived his very children's children, to look narrowly over his linen, his woollen socks, mittens and 'comforters,' supplying afresh the articles in which he was deficient from her ample stores.

It was the usual practice, and a well-earned tribute to his eminence in piety and past tribulation, that Arthur Hyndford should conduct family worship instead of the father of the family during the old minister's stay in every house he visited. He was often asked to put up special prayers, and employ what amount of spiritual power and influence with the Most High he was supposed to possess in interceding with fervent urgency for the granting of such petitions as were very near the hearts of his host and hostess.

Lady Windygates had certainly purposed to avail herself of Mr. Hyndford's presence in this light. She had meant to ask him to plead for a blessing on her nursing of Anaple Boyd, that the child might be spared as a reward of her care. And then Lady Windygates would have brought forward the lamentable case of young Windygates, and sought of her old friend that he might do his best to rid her unhappy son of what was blighting his young life, and would, if it were known, cause him to be a speech and a scandal to the whole waterside. But she was foiled in both her purposes.

'I will pray for the dear bairn as much as you like, Nanny,' he had pledged himself, giving Lady Windygates the name she had borne herself when a bairn, which she had not heard for many a long year from any other lips than his. 'I will pray that she may have what is best for her, but we must leave her living and dying

in wiser hands than ours. What! would you, a Christian woman, insist on the bairnie's living, maybe to be wed to a little worth man, or to have her heart broken by godless bairns of her own, prodigals or reprobates, or to be a poor neglected old maid, sorely pinched for her living, rather than be up yonder betimes with her kind mother, a happy lamb, safe-gathered in the Good Shepherd's fold? The last time I was here it was for the opening of the sightless eyes of Braehead's spirit and his conversion that you would have had me pray with all my might. Now I told you that I had put up that petition with my whole strength over and over again, and would put it up every day of my life to my last breath when I pled for heathens and heretics. But, as to pressing God Almighty to grant me a boon which He had shown He saw fit to deny, I would not be so thrawe¹ and disloyal. He could grant Braehead sight and conversion any day. More, by token, how can I tell that Robbie Wedderburn has not put the sightless eyes of his spirit and his unconverted nature to better use than I have done my seeing een and my second birth four score years syne? How shall I dare to say that he may not be a better man—with all his shortcomings and disadvantages, poor fellow—in his Maker's sight than the like of you and me, Nanny, to whom much has been given, and of whom, be certain, much shall be required, God help us? We have all heard of His covenanted mercies, but who may presume to limit His uncovenanted mercies? No me; with not one, but two feet in the grave, in which I would be fain to rest these weary bones of mine, and with my haffets wrinkled and my head grey when you were a restless wifie no bigger than Anaple.'

Mr. Hyndford's arguments would not have prevented Lady Windygates from appealing to him, with all a mother's heart in her mouth, to do something for Allan in his strait, had she not been anticipated by a wholly unconscious impartial statement bearing on the subject.

Mr. Hyndford took this initiatory step unwittingly one morning when Lady Windygates was standing beside the great cushioned armchair in which he usually sat. It was wheeled before one of the parlour windows to enable him to have the benefit of the frosty sunshine, and to command the pretty sight of Anaple in her warm greatcoat feeding with the crumbs from the breakfast table the mother linnets, wrens, and redbreasts within the mouldering grey arch which led to the house-court and the garden.

¹ Perverse.

Mr. Hyndford had never preached a sermon to birds, like St. Francis, or cherished a tame lion, like St. Jerome, or a pig, like St. Anthony! But the man had been very familiar with all nature's children that came within his ken during his wanderings in the wilds in the days of his youth; he had sought to make friends of them when other friends he had none, and he continued faithful to early associations, and tender to every animal, great and small, to the end of his days.

As he sat there, with his silver beard lending a picturesque, venerable touch to what otherwise was the somewhat mummy-like aspect of his advanced age, he recalled a recent incident of which he wished to speak to Lady Windygates. He took a cheerful interest in all which concerned his friends—a peculiarity, opposed to the supercilious interference of would-be saintliness, that served to endear him doubly to all who knew him.

‘I thought I was well acquainted with your and Windygates’s neighbours,’ he began; ‘but there must be new people hereabout. I saw a perfect stranger tarrying for some of you at the hall door as I went out for my after-breakfast saunter. She was a lady of mark and consideration, I should say, by her bearing and dress; not without a foreign cast about her, like the ladies I have seen in my sojourns abroad. Can it be that our countrywomen are picking up the very walk and carriage of the French madams, along with their laces and feathers? I’m old-fashioned, no doubt; for, though she was a distinguished-looking young madam, I must say I set more store on the simple homely dignity that comes naturally to our lairds’ ladies, and the lasses their daughters.’

Lady Windygates let him run on garrulously, while she knit her brows, clenched her hands, and stared into space as if it were she who was the ghost-seer. But there was no occasion for her maintaining with him—the nonagenarian, who had gone through all manner of experience—the cautious reticence which she had preserved where Anaple was concerned. If he was to do her any good, and help her, and above all help Allan, it was incumbent on her to tell him everything. As seeing is believing, it might be of use for his immediate comprehension and credence of her story, and of the difficulties with which it bristled, that he himself should have been subjected to an interview with the disturber of the family peace.

‘But where is it to end,’ Lady Windygates asked herself, with a mixture of fury, resentment, and creeping dread, ‘if good

Mr. Hyndford is to be assailed? I thought it was bad enough when the creature, who is neither in the body nor out of the body, dared to show herself to an innocent lamb like little Anaple; but to waylay and bamboozle a godly minister, an old saint, by my troth, she is not blate!’

‘Oh, sir,’ Lady Windygates said aloud, ‘I greatly misdoubt it was no friendly neighbour foolish enough to ape foreign fashions you saw hanging about the door. It was a mocking will-o’-the-wisp or spunkie, a lying spirit—for what is it save a lie to keep up the pretence of being in the body when it is not so, and to haunt a poor unfortunate lad till she drive him to destruction? I fear it is a punishment on his father and me for trusting young Windygates to an unbeliever like Braehead. Anyhow, my Allan had the great ill-luck to fall in with this woman, when she was still in the flesh, during his stay in Paris, and to be mixed up innocently with her terrible end, which I am tempted to believe was not altogether unprovoked, since she has followed it up by taking this cruel and cowardly revenge. But I’ll tell you all about it from beginning to end, my dear Mr. Hyndford, if you will have the patience and condescension, together with the goodwill, which has never failed me and mine, to abstract some of your precious thoughts from far higher concerns, and bestow your attention for an hour on an erring, half-distraught mother’s troubles, and tell her what is best to be done for her only bairn’s deliverance.’

Mr. Hyndford listened to Lady Windygates’s tale with the greatest attention; nor did he cast, from the depths of his old experience or the new light supplied by his recent adventure, the slightest discredit on her narrative so far as holding it impossible, according to Braehead’s logical measurement. But he amazed the eager speaker by wasting the first words of pity on the tormentor of the Wedderburns.

‘Is it so, my friend? There are many and divers woes in this woeful world, though when it first came from its Maker’s hands He, who knew everything past, present, and to come, pronounced it very good. Oh! poor wandering shade, can she not find rest after her bloody way-going?’

‘But what for should she come here?’ demanded Lady Windygates, pertinently enough; ‘why can she not bide in her own French country? What good will it do her to persecute young Windygates, to take all the light out of his life, and affront him as if he had done some shameful deed?’

'I spoke to her,' said Mr. Hyndford, who was, as he would have said, 'a little dull of hearing,' and had been pursuing his own reflections, sitting with his withered hands folded on his shrunken knees, instead of listening farther to Lady Windygates.

'You spoke to her!' cried his companion, starting from the chair into which she had sunk. 'They say ghosts always answer when they're spoken to—they have that civility, at least. Did she tell you what mortal thing we could give to her without sin, she wanted, that we might give it and be rid of her company?'

He went on, still following his own train of thought, without clearly catching her words or her meaning—

'I said, "Madam, is there anything I can do for you?" as I thought she might have lost her way. I can understand now the wistful dolour of the glance, which was all the answer I got to my question. That look said, as plainly as speech could say—"Nothing in the whole wide universe—nothing either in this world or the next."'

'But do not say you can do nothing for us, my old friend,' cried Lady Windygates, in passionate earnestness, bending over him, and grasping his arm with both her hands; 'you that are so old and so good, you that have seen so many and such sorrowful sights in your day, you that folk used to hint had power to prevail with both Heaven and Hell, and to control the evil spirits when they came around you in hostile array—that time when you spent months in solitude and hiding.'

'There are some things which had better not be spoken about, Madam,' he said a little sternly, drawing back and in on himself, as if he resented the intrusion into his spiritual privacy and the wild warfare of those far-back days. It was all past and gone—he was in the land of Beulah; why should the few sands of his life that had yet to run be rudely shaken by recalling these painful recollections which had sunk beneath his horizon?

But when she cried again, 'Oh, man, bethink you, do something for Allan,' all his kindly sympathy returned in full force.

'My dear Nanny, do you not think I would if I could? But young Allan must bear his own burden, and we must remember who lays on the burden. Yet, well or not, I can do something for him, and if he will take my advice I pledge myself that my words will not fail. Tell him from me to be up and doing; to take courage and do his work in the world as in the face of God, and neither spirit nor devil will be able to harm him. When I was

over the water, Nanny, I once saw a grand print, a noble design, of a noble man's designing. The subject was a gaunt, battered old knight, about as weary as myself—only he was less spared and favoured in his latter days. He was still riding his war-horse, as battered as himself, through a dismal valley of bleached bones, carrion birds, dim, loathly shapes, and grinning, fantastic phantoms. On the one side was the skeleton, Death, taunting him; on the other was the horned devil, Cleotie, plying him with his lies. But still the brave old knight rode on, steadfast, immovable, in the right and might of his Master, on his day's errand. No need to prophesy who would win that battle in the end.'

CHAPTER XII.

AN UNEQUAL CONTEST.

AFTER the appearances to Anaple and Mr. Hyndford similar appearances became much more frequently and widely manifested, until it was no longer possible to keep the secret or to hide the nature of young Windygates's trouble. The whole house, the whole neighbourhood, to Lady Windygates's discomfiture, and Windygates's disgust, were soon in the highest state of excitement at the strange interlude in the ordinary course of human events. Even little Anaple was enlightened before she finished her visit.

'Do you know what folk are saying, Madam?' she confided to Lady Windygates the last afternoon they sat together; 'that the house is haunted, that the ghost of a fine lady has come all the way from France—though I'm not sensible that there is any difficulty in ghosts travelling. I dare say, if they are too thin to ride on broomsticks like witches, they ride on the wind or the moon, because anyway there is one hunting young Windygates up and down, back and fore, turning up in every walk in the garden and room in the house. Could it have been the spirit I saw and curtseyed to? Was that the way you looked so put about and bade me not tell?'

'Bairn, bairn, this is not talk for the like of you. The next thing that will happen will be you frightened out of your wits. But I'll have something to say to these silly maids of mine, for telling you such nonsense.'

'No, you must not blame them, Madam, for it was me who speered why they flew through the rooms in the gloaming and

would not stir out as far as the water-barrel or the dust-hole, and what they were whispering about; and, if it is not nonsense, why should I not know the truth? I've heard you say the truth was always the best; and do not mind about me, Lady Windygates, though I own I was very frightened at first. I must beg your pardon for asking Jenny to leave a candle burning in my room till I fell asleep. Even with the light I had to draw the sheet over my face, which was like to choke me and strangle my cough, which you've taken such trouble to still. I thought of that, and that I might soon be a ghost myself.'

'Whisht, Anaple my dear, that is as God wills.'

'Ay, but if He wills it I would little like to send folk into a panic; should I be let come back to see what my old friends were doing, I'm sure I could never wish to do them ill, and if I were so wicked God would hinder me. After I minded that, I just said my prayers, went where I liked, and slept like a top.'

'That's right, Anaple, always do that, and nothing can harm you.'

'Yes, Madam, but I've seen it again twice since I mistook it for a fine lady.'

Still the ghost, if seen by many, appeared with striking reservedness. It was never seen either by Windygates or Lady Windygates, though the last was not without a desperate, half-horrified desire to encounter this being of another world. For Lady Windygates still carried herself in the family misfortune with a high hand, and insisted that she took it very ill of woman or ghost, body or spirit, to omit waiting on the lady of the house in the stranger's coming and going. On close consideration the victims of the intrusion could be largely relegated to two classes. The first consisted of persons—whether children, or old men and women—who were guileless and saintly. Perhaps that very reason, and because they were not far from other mansions in the Heavenly Father's house, they were more *en rapport* with spiritual influences of all kinds, while they were beyond injury from those of dubious shade and uncertain quality.

The second class numbered those whose consciences were ill at ease—like that of Pate, one of the Windygates manservants. He was suspected of having 'lichtied' a lass who had gone demented and drowned herself in the Deerwater. There was also the maidservant Ailie, who was reported to be heartless, close-fisted to her ailing mother and imbecile brother.

Outside those classes was another considerable class, merging into one or other of the first, consisting of persons by nature or nurture emotional, hysterical, and superstitious with a slavish superstition. From the last bondage not even the Kirk, with its strong, great-hearted sway, its proclamation of the right by private judgment and prudence to glorify and enjoy God for ever, could free the votaries.

But, though the ghost in their midst made selections of acquaintances to begin with, the infection of its company, as in the case of many maladies both physical and spiritual, was spreading. The wildest stories were in circulation, until men and women had not peace and leisure in the universal commotion to do their proper work, as good Mr. Hyndford had recommended young Windygates to do his at any cost, leaving the rest to God.

When Braehead heard of the extent to which the evil had gone, and the height it had reached, he talked learnedly and sagaciously of the extraordinary marvels recorded in the Roman Catholic Saints' Calendar, and the strange experiences in mediæval monasteries and convents.

But, as Lady Windygates said with reason, what better were they at Windygates of such explanations—unless he was prepared to put an end to the visitation? Call the thing a ghost, or a *lusus naturæ*, what did it signify if he could not drive it away any more than his neighbours could? 'No, you need not speak, Robbie Wedderburn,' Lady Windygates was rude enough to say, provoked by his unshaken complacency; 'your philosophy is of little avail, or else this would never have happened—not that I mean to be so unreasonable as to put all the blame on you, only that you are no better or cleverer at getting at the bottom of this affair and being done with it than any unlettered gowk among us. No, no, you need not speak, Braehead, for your housekeeper telled me the last time I was over that after you've talked yourself hoarse on your *lusus naturæ* and your natural causes, and the incredibility of every other world than this sorry one, you'll shriek like a bairn for a light when you're left a minute without one, and you'll take two of the dark stairs at a time, though you're well up in years, and of a stout habit of body into the bargain, to gain the refuge of your bedroom. I believe you're sometimes sorry, after all, that you can no longer say your prayers like little Anaple Boyd, and trust to One above you "to be at peace,"'

'Madam,' said Braehead, not deigning to lose his temper, 'women's tongues are no scandal.'

The disturbance was brought to a climax on Hallowe'en. One might have thought that the inhabitants of Windygates had enough of the supernatural—that they would have little spirit left in them for the practice of the occult rites of the night, and the appeal to those subtle essences and invisible forces which were supposed to have the mastery at that season, the persistent tarrying of one of which among them was at the root of the general disorder. But it seemed as if there was an irresistible obligation on the maids and serving-men, with their cronies of all ages, married as well as unmarried, in the house and at the offices, to carry through the mysterious incantations. Not only were the harmless dooking for apples and the burning of nuts undertaken as of old—what could stay the dipping of the blindfolded lads' and lasses' hands into the basins of clear water and foul, and the basin which was void of either, the pulling the kail-stalks at haphazard from the kail-yard, the solitary eating of an apple before a mirror, the drawing of the hemp-seed, the dipping of the sark shern into the stream where four lairds' lands met? And every ceremony was conducted in the house and outside the house with a repressed interest and excitement that was well-nigh maddening, with rushes and clutches, skirls and sobs, that took the breath away for the instant.

Lady Windygates went up and down, scolding the delinquents in vain. Young Windygates looked up with his lack-lustre eyes and colourless face as if to ask what all the disturbance was about, for till that moment he had seen and heard nothing to explain it. He was not aware what was the day of the month, he did not care when he was told. He try their childish freits again? Never. Were they mocking him? What had he to do with such silly trifling? His fortune was told, his destiny was sealed, if they cared to hear it.

Windygates lost his temper, swore at the infernal din, when, for anything he knew, stray members of the infernal world might be listening to every rash word he said; he vowed solemnly that if the delirious folly were not put a stop to soon he would put on his cocked hat and quit the house and the country, going where he would find quietness and reason—a threat which was like a man's selfishness, Lady Windygates remarked cuttingly. Even King David would have fain taken the wings of a dove, flown

away and been at rest, leaving his royal household and kingdom to pay the penalty from which he had made his escape. But it was clear that something must be tried to end the incipient frenzy and expectation and state of turmoil, which had become chronic and unendurable.

Lady Windygates, on her own responsibility, summoned the Rev. Andrew Brydon, the minister of the parish, the appointed shepherd of this much agitated corner of his fold, to lay the ghost as he was in a manner bound to do. Windygates, though the step was not of his taking, consented to be present with the rest of the household at the ceremony, out of respect to his minister and his kirk. But young Windygates doggedly declined to countenance the intervention, though it was mainly on his behalf. He would not be induced to regard it other than an unwarrantable intrusion into his personal affairs and troubles, with which no third person had any call to meddle. They had invested him with so much more rapidly matured manliness that he was ready to resist even the wishes of the heads of the house on this matter. He called their interference a liberty which he was entitled to resent. Granted that he, Allan Wedderburn, had been the undoubted instrument of bringing, however reluctantly, all the scathe and scorn on Windygates, Lady Windygates might have said that this attitude of Allan's was another instance of the selfishness of man in the abstract; but she refrained in this case.

The Rev. Andrew Brydon was much more of a lamb than of a lion—he was only the latter in theological controversies, and sometimes in the pulpit, where the sins of the times urgently demanded public castigation. In his private capacity as young Windygates's tutor he had never been able, even when backed by full permission from Lady Windygates, to urge his pupil along the thorny road of scholarship by any save the mildest means; he constantly regarded Braehead—the heretical black sheep of his flock—with sorrow, not anger, nor with sharp pricks of personal remarks, lest every failure of courage and fidelity on his part had led to Robbie Wedderburn's lamentable lapse into unbelief, lest his blood should be on the head of his cowardly and slothful pastor. How could the Rev. Andrew be furious with a man toppling on the brink of the crater which surrounded the penal fires, while the man himself, in his hardened scepticism, could very well afford to laugh and snap his fingers at the minister and the dominie and Mr. Andrew Lamb 'all rolled into one,' as in the

sly face of the ancient riddle, or 'Andrew with the cutty gun,' and the scornful denomination which Braehead applied to his appointed spiritual guide?

The Rev. Andrew, though he was long-suffering in his meekness, could never have survived the protracted ordeal through which Arthur Hyndford had passed. It was well for the weaker man that his lines were cast in other times and places.

It goes without saying that the domestic supremacy of woman, so conspicuous on the Deerwater, was strongly exemplified at the Manse of Deerholms. It was proverbially said that the Rev. Andrew's voice was never heard in his own house, that there he was contented to be a dumb dog. Not that he was unhappily mated: on the contrary, it was in his agreeable security with regard to the high principles and the excellent parts of his spouse, that from the moment he entered his own domains he willingly resigned the reins of the family chariot, heavily freighted with children of all ages and sizes—while the wheels were not too well greased with the money which makes wheels roll smoothly—to the capable driving of Mrs. Brydon. At all times, unless on a question of what he called Christian fundamentals, the minister would have greatly preferred being driven to driving.

To a woman who loved power after the fashion of her neighbours there was a temptation afforded by the supineness in this respect of her partner in life; accordingly, there was a little dissatisfied impression afloat in the parish that Mrs. Brydon did not always confine herself to her proper sphere, that she would fain have written her husband's sermons and mounted the pulpit in his place. The limited education where schools of divinity were concerned, and the laws of the Presbyterian Church, forbade this usurpation, even if the Rev. Andrew had been so left to himself as to give it his sanction. But it was generally held that she took too much upon her, not only in the management of the glebe, but also at prayer meetings and in parochial visitations.

As two of a trade never agree, there was a smouldering feud between the minister's wife and Lady Windygates. The former declared that the latter abused her position as the lady of the chief heritor in the parish to dictate to the minister and positively coerce him on occasions. The latter cited a well-known passage in an Epistle of St. Paul's to the effect that a bishop (or presbyter) should rule his family, especially his wife, and alleged that it was a clerical scandal for him not merely to be henpecked on his own

account, but to suffer his wife to push her encroachments into his sacred calling.

At the same time, the feud was that of two intrepidly conscientious, right-minded, essentially kind-hearted women; in any serious misfortune or grave disaster the one would have flown to the help of the other at whatever personal inconvenience or risk—at least as fast as if they had been kissing and cooing over each other all day long. When measles and whooping-cough (it was called chin-cough then) broke out badly at the Manse, and poor Mrs. Brydon had her hands full, with one of her children in his little coffin and two others lying dangerously ill, Lady Windygates deliberately cut herself off from Windygates and her son, then a child in his nursery, and descended—a host in herself—on the afflicted woman, remaining there till she had lent her powerful aid in nursing back the sick to health, and in routing the last lingering breath of infection.

Notwithstanding these truths, and the solid respect which lay at the bottom of the pair's wrangling, Lady Windygates resented Mrs. Brydon's bearing her husband company when he came up to Windygates to make an onslaught on the irrepressible ghost. It was all very well for Alison Brydon to pretend that he should not enter into mysterious peril without her sharing it—she was his wife, and it was her duty and privilege to be at his back when it was lawful; or that she was so concerned about the family at Windygates in their unheard-of tribulation that she felt bound to come up and show her sympathy. But this was a very delicate matter. Young Windygates's peculiar trouble was not to be exposed to the whole waterside. If Alison Brydon had been a woman of ordinary modesty and discretion she would not have thrust her snub nose and 'rowie' figure in her tartan riding-habit into such a family scene. Lady Windygates even contrived by some ungenerous sophistry to throw the blame of the failure of the enterprise—for it did fail—on Mrs. Brydon's unjustifiable intrusion. It crippled and restrained her husband in the courageous exercise of his office. He ought to have solicited a private interview with the spectre, to have dogged and waylaid it, though he were alone and the time the middle of the night, and the place the most unfrequented part of the house. What was a man or a minister worth if he feared either spirit or devil in the discharge of his duty? if he took refuge in the shadow of his wife? Not that Lady Windygates blamed the Rev. Andrew, it was all Alison Brydon's

forwardness. It might be according to precedent to call all the family that would come to the ministry into the dining-room, to read a chapter in the Old Testament against familiar spirits, and a chapter in the New against the discerning of spirits, and to put up a prayer to be delivered from the wiles of the Devil, in the course of which the Rev. Andrew three separate times proclaimed in his hollowest tones, 'Avaunt, Satan!'

That might be his version of the precedent supplied by the old Scotch liturgy—no English imposition, but John Knox's liturgy for the laying of ghosts—just as there was a precedent for the exposing and condemning of witches; but it did not at all come up to Lady Windygates's notions of what was required of a minister of the Gospel in such distressing circumstances, affecting his leading parishioners. More than that, Lady Windygates's attention was diverted and her mind distracted during the entire performance by Alison Brydon's ostentatious sighs and groans. They said, as plainly as sighs and groans could say, that, even as pride and a haughty spirit were condemned in the Scriptures, so this downcome to the credit of the family was a merited chastisement of her, Lady Windygates, for having been so uplifted where her son was concerned. Had she not peremptorily put a stop to an idle rumour which had once or twice during the previous winter coupled young Windygates's name with that of Isabel Brydon, one of the Manse girls?

Lady Windygates was not astonished, on the whole, however vexed, when, within a week of that service in the dining-room at Windygates, Harry Bill, the cow-boy, ran in from the wood-house as if an army of fiends were at his heels, shouting that the French lady was after him, and that there was a lighted candle burning at the end of each of her ten fingers.

But Lady Windygates might well ask herself again, where was this to end? Her own nerves, strong as they were, began to give way. She did not know how Windygates felt when he started in the dark morning and came home in the moonlight from a distant expedition. He was a man and made no sign; young Windygates made none that he could help—none save his wasting flesh and the glitter of an eye kindled by a light not of this world. She would start and 'grue,' and her heart would stand still, when she came along the twilight gallery, which was, in a manner, the headquarters of the ghost; she seemed to feel a presence which she could not distinguish—she, Lady Windygates, who had not known

what fear meant, who had boldly summoned this very spectre to answer to her for its 'walking' at Windygates, to do its worst to her, and let young Allan go, since he had never with his will done it any unpardonable injury!

'If neither sinner nor saint can do any good,' reflected Lady Windygates, no doubt referring to Braehead and Mr. Hyndford; 'if the minister, even supposing he had the whole Kirk, and not just his pushing madam of a wife, at his back, is not a particle of use, I'm fain to try what a woman's wit will do. I hope I may be pardoned if there is presumption in counting on its efficacy here. I heard last night that Maisie Hunter had returned to the Haughs three days ago from her long stay with her cousins in the North. I'll write to her to come over to help us; she has a dauntless spirit of her own—that bit lassie—and she has an interest, it may be the first interest, in righting what is far wrong here. True, it may set her against my Allan for the rest of her days; but, on the other hand, it may be the very thing to win and rivet her regard—for women like Maisie have a turn for flinging themselves into the breach. Anyway, there is no time to lose. I'll send for Maisie.'

(To be continued.)

CONCERNING SHEEP.

BY A SHEEP-HERDER.

IN spite of the interest I took, and still take, in sheep, I am convinced there is no stupider animal in all creation. One may perhaps make out, by special pleading, that horses and dogs are astonishingly intelligent, but no one can convince a man who has herded sheep, and seen them exhibit their foolishness in a thousand ways, that they are anything but semi-idiotic, although to an outsider without responsibility, their obstinacy and obtuseness may be merely farcical.

Remembering how they served me when I was charged with seeing to their safety and general well-being, I sometimes laugh, but at the time I generally swore. One would think that a ewe who had been the mother of a lamb for several years in succession would at last learn that man was not blood-thirstily desirous of destroying its last acquisition in the shape of offspring, but nevertheless an ancient ewe is as foolish as her grand-daughter, showing the most visible anxiety on one's approach, even when the herder comes to assist her in her trouble. The lambing season is at all times a period of toil and care in a country where the flocks are herded by day and night on account of wild dogs or coyotés; but if the ewes showed the least spark of reason, that would lighten more than half one's burdens. Let me give an illustration, and say that I have a dozen ewes, with offspring from a few hours to a day old, which I must put by themselves. I have made the flock travel during the day, so that their little corral is now no more than half a mile off. Meantime the sun is sinking over the brow of a westward hill, and in less than an hour it will be dark. Surely, a novice would say, it cannot take more than a few minutes to put these in yonder corral, which seems but a step across the plain. Wait, my young friend, and see.

I am on horseback, and have my long stock whip. I go carefully through the flock, slowly drive the mothers out, and gather my twenty-four in one group. I put their heads in the right direction, and move behind them in a quiet walk. But some of them gaze longingly after those who are not yet mothers, and quietly edge off to the right. I intercept them cautiously. Now

that ewe on the left has her head where her tail ought to be, and her lamb totters after her. When I have turned her those on the right have reversed front again, so I go back a little more quickly. With a sudden jump the hindmost ewe goes on, frightens her nearest neighbour, the last lamb is left alone, and the next one has a ewe by its side which is not its mother. Now the result of this manoeuvre is very complex, and not to be disposed of in a few words. The deserted lamb bleats loudly and laments, whereon all the ewes turn round hurriedly in great anxiety, except perhaps the real mother, who is content for a moment with her neighbour's offspring. Perhaps two or three run back a little way, and then their lambs cry out for them to return. By-and-by the ewe who has the little stranger by her side turns to smell it, and for a moment looks suspicious. When a second sniff has converted her dread suspicion into certainty she butts the poor staggering little wretch over, and scurries fearfully from one to the other, knocking half of them down when she is sure they are not hers. By this time she is at the head of the band, and the horrible thought strikes her that she must have left her lamb with the main flock. She is off like lightning, and so am I, being lucky if I stop and turn her. When I do get her back the others are carefully retracing their steps; while the deserted lamb, being sure that every sheep it sees is its parent, tries to obtain milk on the strength of the relationship. By the time it has been knocked down half a dozen times the mother comes up at a run, there is a bleat and a baa, and momentary content. I turn them and begin again, being a little heated in temper. I crack my whip softly, and then louder as I move on. Suddenly a lamb, probably the very youngest, is struck with the evident belief that my horse is its mother, and tries to get under his hoofs. I stop until the deserted parent comes and persuades it that a horse after all is not a sheep. When that is settled, and the lamb has taken a little milk to make quite sure, I move on again. Alas! I come a little too close, and a ewe who is smitten with sudden intense hunger, and the apparent desire to eradicate one particular knot of grass, does not see me until I am right over her. In a moment she frightens all the rest, the big sheep are together, and the lambs by themselves. Then what a Babel! I have to stop two or three who break out to go to the main body, now some distance away, and then the lambs come to the conclusion that one ewe in particular is responsible for them all, while she is perversely inclined to believe that I have stolen

her peculiar and natural property. The other agonised mothers hurry up and dash into the bleating band, smell and butt over one after the other in frantic anxiety, and then subside into their customary demeanour as each finds her own. There is peace once more; but by this time the sun has disappeared, the shadows lengthen rapidly over the dusty plain, and the corral is nearly as far off as it was at first.

What next, then? Why, this, that one lamb declines, poor tired little wretch, to go further on any persuasion. So I dismount, and lift it up very slowly, while the wild-eyed mother watches every motion I make. I walk on, but before I have got a yard the ewe runs madly after the rest, looking for the very lamb she saw me lift, and her baaing sorrow would make any one else but a sheep-herder pity her. After some ineffectual sniffs, which the other ewes resent, she too thinks that her lamb has returned to the main flock in some miraculous manner, although she ought to know that it cannot move at all. I have to put it down, mount in hot haste, and do another fiery gallop. Then the same thing occurs again, but I am more cruelly careful this time, and pinch the lamb every few yards to make it bleat. The mother runs up and down wildly, but comes to smell it as I stop and hold it out at arm's length. Then she backs, and after another step or two I have to repeat the holding out and pinching, while on both sides of me the others are trying to return. At last I have to put it down and get them together again, with the inevitable result that they all lose their lambs once more, and unanimously resume their sniffing, butting over, and wild rushes, just as if it was the first time it had ever happened. And it is nearly dark by the time we reach the corral. When we do, all the ewes get in while the lambs stay out. On getting the lambs in, the ewes are out. When I think I am on the point of getting them all in one ewe will stay out with the wrong lamb, whom she knocks sprawling. Then she rushes half a dozen times round the corral without seeing the entrance. Meanwhile the lamb finds its mother with the fence in between, and is making great efforts to get through a hole much too small for it, while the mother eyes it from within in the last stage of fear. If I finally can leave them by the time the light of day has quite faded and supper is finished at the camp or home ranch, I am lucky. And this is repeated often and often, until the lambs know their mothers well and the sheep have become accustomed to be nightly corralled.

It may perhaps throw some light on the obscure causes of the stupidity of sheep to see them fight. To watch two rams engage in a duel, which they do in a most gentlemanly manner, as if it were as much a matter of etiquette as an engagement with swords in the environs of Paris, is better than most farces nowadays. Perhaps there are some ten or twenty rams in a yard or corral, and presently two put their heads together. Probably they are having a conversation, and in it some debatable matter crops up, for one shakes his head impatiently as if doubting the word of his interlocutor. The insulted ram looks up, advances a step or two, and they rattle their horns together. Instantly all the other gentlemen gather round as the two intending combatants march backwards step by step with an admirable slowness and deliberation. They are the two knights at the ends of the lists. There is an instant's pause, and then they hurl themselves violently forward to meet forehead to forehead with a shock that ought to break their skulls. Then the solemn backward march recommences, the pause is made, and the two belligerents leap at each other once more, and the terrible thud is heard again. Sometimes they run ten courses before one turns dizzy and declines the battle, but oftener five or six blows make the thinner-skulled turn away, to be contemptuously hustled in the rear by the conqueror. Occasionally the sight of one set of duellists inspires the unoccupied lookers-on with a noble ardour, and couple after couple join in to march backwards side by side, and rush forward in line to meet the opposing forces. It seems to me that there is more interest in this than the mere farce of the display. However such a habit arose, it can hardly now be advantageous to the species, and must tend to lower them in the scale of intellect; for while the thickest-skulled remain lords, those with the most room for brains often get their craniums cracked with fatal results. This may help to explain the very uncommon idiocy of domesticated sheep, just as the duello among the Australian blackfellows may throw light on the dull thick-headedness of some of the native humans in that country. For their favourite method of duelling—at least it was that of which I heard most—is to take two clubs, and having drawn lots in some manner for the first blow, to strike the loser on the head, as he bends down, with the utmost force possible. If that blow is not decisive—and it is not always so—it is the turn of the other man to do his best, and so on until a skull is cracked or its owner

rendered insensible. It would be hard to find a nearer parallel to the duel of the rams.

It was at Mossgiel in New South Wales, when I was taking some hundred and fifty of these same rams to a paddock, that I was struck by the earliest manifestation of perfect instinct in a dog that I ever saw. It was in a little rough-haired colley pup, whose mother belonged to a man who was travelling. As she littered at our place he was going to destroy the pups, but fortunately there was another colley suckling some at the same time, and I made her undertake the office of foster-mother for three by force. I held her down in spite of her resistance while the little fellows I had selected made a meal, and at the end of some days she did not know the strangers from her own, and brought them up together. I kept the most promising one for myself, and named him Bo'son. He was only two months old when I took him out to the place where I was at work, and until then he had never beheld a sheep at close quarters. For three or four days I kept him tied up close to my tent, but on the fourth he got away and followed me and my big dog Sancho down to the gate of the paddock where I had just driven these rams. On reaching them I found I had left my tools for mending wire-fencing behind me, and as I rode back Sancho came with me, for there was no need to fear they would stray far, being slow and steady in their ways, and also somewhat advanced in age. I had not noticed that Bo'son remained behind. On returning in a few minutes I saw, to my surprise, that the rams had not spread out to feed, but were bunched up together in a close mass, and that the outer ones were following the motions of something which I could not see, but which they evidently feared. I reined in my horse, waved back Sancho, and watched. Presently I saw woolly little Bo'son, who certainly was no bigger than the head of the least of them, paddling round and round the circle in a quiet, determined, and business-like manner. I remained motionless and watched to see whether he was doing it by accident; but no, he made his rounds again and again, and as he did so the huge-horned rams followed him with their eyes. It was with much difficulty that I enticed him home, and from his air I have no doubt he would have gone on circling his self-imposed charge until his legs had failed him from fatigue. By the time I left Mossgiel he was a very promising sheep-dog.

Sancho, of whom I have spoken, was a large smooth-haired

Tasmanian, and the best animal to handle a flock numbering tens of thousands that I ever saw. Yet when I first owned him he had more pleasure in chasing a low-flying crow than in doing his duty, and it cost me some trouble and him some suffering before I broke him of an unworkmanlike habit due to his former training. He had worked for two years near a well, from which water was drawn in the hot season for the sheep, and to the troughs came not only these, but innumerable crows from many miles round. The men engaged in raising water encouraged Sancho to drive them away, and, as one of them, who afterwards worked where I was, told me, he would race up and down for hours at a time while the miserable crows tried in vain to get a drink. Old Veale pretended that he knew what the birds said about it, and he translated their melancholy cawing into 'O-o-h, Sancho-o-o, you wretched dawg,' with a long nasal crow-like twang at the end which made Sancho prick up his ears when he heard him relate it. But when I had finished with him he would actually look the other way if a crow flew by, and pretend to be violently anxious to scare anything else in the world. For he was as frightened of my whip as the sheep were of him, and he had reason while they had none.

But is there anything more timid than a sheep? I suppose not among domesticated animals, and yet I believe the most serious fright I have ever had in all my life was caused by these same inoffensive, innocent quadrupeds. It was not inflicted on me by a ram, which is occasionally bellicose, but by ewes with their lambs, and I distinctly remember being as surprised as if the sky had fallen or something utterly opposed to all causation had confronted me. I want to meet a man, even of approved courage, who would not be shocked into fair fright by having half a dozen ewes suddenly turn and charge him with the fury of a bullock's mad onset. Would he not gasp, be stricken dumb, and look wild-eyed at the customary nature about him, just as if they had broken into awful speech? I imagine he would, for I know that it shook my nerves for an hour afterwards, even though I had by that time recovered sufficient courage to experiment on them in order to see if the same result would again follow. I was sheep-herding then in North-west Texas, and had about five hundred ewes and lambs under my care. The day was warm, though the wind was blowing strongly, and when noon approached the flock travelled but slowly towards the place where I wished them to make their midday

camp. To urge them on I took my long bandanna handkerchief, and flicked the nearest to me with it as I walked behind. As I did so the wind blew it strongly, and it suddenly occurred to me to make a sort of flag of it in order to see if it would frighten them. I took hold of two corners and held it over my head, so that it might blow out to its full extent. Now, whether it was due to the glaring colour, or the strange attitude, or to the snapping of the outer edge of the handkerchief in the wind—and I think it was this last—I cannot say, but the hindmost ewes suddenly stopped, turned round, eyed me wildly, and then half a dozen made a desperate charge, struck me on the legs, threw me over, and fled precipitately as I fell. It was a reversal of experience too unexpected! I lay awhile and looked at things, expecting to see the sun blue at the very least, and then I gathered myself together slowly. In all seriousness I was never so taken aback in all my life, and I was almost prepared for a ewe's biting me. I remembered the Australian story of the rich squatter catching a man killing one of his sheep. 'What are you doing that for?' he inquired, as a preliminary to requesting his company home until the police could be sent for. The questioned one looked up and answered coolly, though not, I imagine, without a twinkle in his eye. 'Kill it? why am I killing it? Look here, my friend, I'll kill any man's sheep as bites *me*.' For my part, I don't think biting would have alarmed me more. After that I made experiments on the ewes, and always found that the flying bandanna simply frightened them into utter desperation when nothing else would. It was a long time before they got used to it. I should like to know if any other sheep-herders ever had the same experience at home or abroad.

I spoke above of the lambs, when they were very young, taking my horse for their mother. This was in California; but in Texas I have often seen them run after a bullock or steer. One day on the prairie a lamb had been born during camping-time, and when it was about two hours old a small band of cattle came down to drink at the spring. Among these was a very big steer, with horns nearly a yard long, who came close to the mother, just then engaged in cleaning her offspring. She ran off, bleating for her lamb to follow. The little chap, however, came to the conclusion that the steer was calling it, and went tottering up to the huge animal, that towered above him like the side of a cañon, apparently much to the latter's embarrassment. The steer eyed it

carefully, and lifted his legs out of the way as the lamb ran against them, even backing a little, as if as surprised as I had been when the ewes assaulted me. Then all of a sudden he shook his head as if laughing, put one horn under the lamb, threw it about six feet over his back, and calmly walked on. I took it for granted that the unwary lamb was dead, but on going up I found it only stunned, and, being as yet all gristle, it soon recovered sufficiently to acknowledge its real mother, who had witnessed its sudden elevation stamping with fear and anxiety.

Sheep-herding is supposed by those who have never followed it to be an easy, idle, lazy way of procuring a livelihood; but no man who knows as much of their ways as I do will think that. It is true that there are times when there is little or nothing to be done, when a man can sit under a tree quietly and think of all the world save his own particular charge; but for the most part, if he have a conscience, he will feel a burden of responsibility upon him which of itself, independently of the work he may have to do, will earn him his little monthly wage of twenty dollars and the rough ranch food of 'hog and hominy.' For there is no ceasing of labour for the Texas herder of the plains; Sunday and week-day alike, the dawning sun should see him with his flock, and even at night he is still with them as they are 'bedded out' in the open. Even if he can 'corral' them in a rough sort of yard, some slinking coyoté may come by and scare them into breaking bounds; and when they are not corralled, the bright moon may entice them to feed quietly against the wind, until at last the herder wakes to find his charge has vanished, and must be anxiously sought for. In Australia little or no herding is done, the sheep are left to their own devices for the greater part of the year, unless there should be unusual scarcity of water; but, even there, to have charge of so many thousand animals and so many miles of fencing makes it no enviable task, while the labour, when it does come, is hard and unremitting. In New South Wales I have often been eighteen and twenty hours in the saddle, and have reached home at last so wearied out that I could scarcely dismount. One day I used up three horses and covered over ninety miles, more than fifty of it at a hard canter or gallop—and if that be not work I should like to know what is. This, too, goes on day after day during shearing, just when the days are growing hot and hotter still, the spare herbage browning, and the water becoming scantier and scantier. And for a recompense? There is none in working

with sheep. They are quiet, peaceable, stupid, illogical, incapable of exciting affection, very capable of rousing wrath; far different from the terrible excitement of a bellowing herd of long-horned cattle as they break away in a stampede, among whom is danger and sudden death and the glory of motion and conquest; or with horses thundering over the plain in hundreds, like a riderless squadron shaking the ground, with waving manes, long flowing tails, and flashing eyeballs, whom one can love and delight in, and shout to with a strange vivid joy that sends the blood tingling to the heart and brain. Were I to go back to such a life I would choose the danger, and be discontented to maunder on behind the slow and harmless wool-bearers, cursing a little every now and again at their foolishness, and then plodding on once more, bunched up in an inert mass on a slow-going horse who wearily stretches his neck almost to the ground, as he dreams, perhaps, of the long, exhilarating gallops after his own kind that we once had together, being conscious, I dare say, of the contemptuous pity I (his rider) feel for the slow foredoomed muttons that crawl before us on the long and weary plain.

THE OTHER ENGLISHMAN.

‘You are English, I take it, sir?’

It was clear to me that at any rate the speaker was. I was travelling alone. I had not fallen in with three Englishmen in as many weeks. And I turned to inspect the newcomer with a cordiality his smudged and smutty face could not wholly suppress. ‘I am,’ I answered, ‘and I am very glad to meet a fellow-countryman.’

‘You are a stranger here?’ He did not take his eyes from me, but indicated by a gesture of his thumb the busy wharf below us, piled high with hundreds and thousands of frail crates full of oranges. From the upper deck of the ‘San Miguel’ we looked directly down upon it, and could see all that was coming or going in the trim basin about us. The San Miguel, a steamer of the Segovia Quadra and Company’s line, bound for several places on the coast southward, was waiting to clear out of El Grao, the harbour of Valencia, and I was waiting rather impatiently to clear out with her. ‘You are a stranger here?’ he repeated.

‘Yes; I have been in the town four or five days, but otherwise I am a stranger,’ I answered.

‘You are not in the trade?’ he continued. He meant the orange trade.

‘No, I am not; I am travelling for pleasure,’ I answered readily. ‘You will be able to understand that, though it is more than any Frenchman or Spaniard can.’ I smiled as I spoke, but he was not very responsive.

‘It is a queer place to visit for pleasure,’ he said dryly, looking away from me to the busy throng about the orange crates.

‘Not at all,’ I retorted; ‘it is a lively town and quaint besides, and it is warm and sunny. I cannot say as much as that of Madrid, from which I came two or three weeks back.’

‘Come straight here?’ he asked laconically.

I was growing a trifle tired of his curiosity, but I answered, ‘No; I stayed a short time at Toledo and Aranjuez—oh, and at several other places.’

‘You speak Spanish?’

‘Not much. *Muy poco de Castellano,*’ I laughed, calling to

mind that maddening grimace by which the Spanish peasant indicates that he does not understand, and is not going to understand you. He is a good fellow enough, is Sancho Panza, but having made up his mind that you do not speak Spanish, the purest Castilian is after that not Spanish for him.

‘You are going some way with us—perhaps to Carthagena?’ persisted the inquisitor.

He laid a queer stress upon the last word, and with it shot at me a sly glance—a glance so unexpected and so unpleasantly suggestive that I did not answer him at once. Instead, I looked at him more closely. He was a wiry young fellow, rather below than above the middle height, to all appearance the chief engineer. Everything about him, not excluding the atmosphere, was greasy and oily, as if he had come straight from the engine-room. The whites of his eyes showed with unlovely prominence. Seeing him thus, I took a dislike for him. ‘To Carthagena!’ I answered brusquely. ‘No, I am not going to stay at Carthagena. Why should you suppose so, may I ask? Unless, indeed,’ I added, as another construction of his words occurred to me, ‘you think I want to see a bit of fighting? No, my friend, the fun might grow too furious.’

To explain this I should add that three days before there had been a mutiny among the troops at Carthagena. It was mentioned at the time in the English papers. An outlying fort was captured, and the governor of the city killed before the attempt was suppressed. Of course this was in everyone’s mouth, and I fancied that his question referred to it.

My manner or my words, however, disconcerted him. Without saying more he turned away, not going below at once, but standing on the main deck near the office in the afterpart. There was a good deal of bustle in that quarter. The captain, second officer, and clerk were there, giving and taking receipts and what not. He did not speak to them, but leaned against the rail close at hand. I had an uncomfortable feeling that he was watching me, and this I suppose gave rise to a strange shrinking from the man, which did not stay with me always, but returned from time to time.

Presently the dinner-bell rang, and simultaneously the San Miguel moved out to sea. We were to spend the next day at Alicante, and the following one at Carthagena.

Dinner was not a cheerful meal. The officers of the ship did

not speak English or French, and were not communicative in any language. Besides myself there were only three first-class passengers. They were ladies—relatives of the newly-appointed Governor of Carthagena, and about to join him there. I have no doubt that they were charming and fashionable people, but their partiality for the knife in eating was calculated to prejudice them unfairly in English eyes. Consequently, when I came on deck again, and the engineer—Sleigh, he told me his name was—sidled up to me, I received him graciously enough. He proffered the omnipresent cigarette, and I provided him in return with something to drink. He urged me to go down with him and see the engine-room, and after some hesitation I did so. You see, it was after dinner.

‘I have pretty much my own way,’ he said, boastingly. ‘They cannot do without English engineers. They tried once, and lost three boats in six months. In harbour, my time is my own. I have seven stokers under me, all Spaniards. They tried it on with me when I first came aboard, they did! But the first that out with his knife to me, I knocked on the head with a shovel. I have had none of their sauce since!’

‘Was he much hurt?’ I asked, scanning my companion. He was not big, I have said, and he slouched and shambled. But with all this there was an air of swaggering dare-devilry about him that gave colour to his story.

‘I don’t know,’ he answered. ‘They took him to the hospital; he never came aboard again—that is all I know.’

‘I suppose your pay is good?’ I suggested, timidly. To confess the truth, I felt myself at a disadvantage with him down there. The flaring lights and deep shadows, the cranks and pistons whirling at our elbows, the clank and din, and the valves that hissed at unexpected moments, were matters of every hour to him—me they imbued with a mean desire to propitiate. As my after-dinner easiness abated, I regretted that it had induced me to come down.

He laughed—a short harsh laugh. ‘Pretty fair,’ he said, ‘with my opportunities. Do you see that jacket?’

‘Yes.’

‘That is my shore-going jacket, that is,’ with a wink. ‘Here, look at it!’

I complied. It appeared on first sight to be an ordinary sailor’s pea-coat; but, looking more closely, I found that inside

were dozens of tiny pockets. At the mouth of each pocket a small hook was fixed to the lining.

'They are for watches,' he explained, when he saw that I did not comprehend; 'I get five francs over the price for every one I carry ashore to a friend of mine—duty free, you understand.'

I nodded to show that I did understand. 'And which is your port for that?' I said, desiring to say something as I turned to ascend.

He touched me on the shoulder, and I found his face close to mine. His eyes were glittering in the light of the lamp that hung by the steam-gauge, with the same expression in them that had so perplexed me before dinner. 'At Carthagena!' he whispered, bringing his face still closer to mine; 'at Carthagena! Wait a minute, mate, I have told you something,' he went on, hoarsely. 'I am not too particular, and, what is more, I am not afraid! Ain't you going to tell me something?'

'I have nothing to tell you!' I stammered, staring at him.

'Ain't you going to tell me something, mate?' he repeated monotonously. His voice was low, but it seemed to me that there was a menace in it.

'I have not an idea what you mean, my good fellow,' I said, and, turning away with some abruptness—my eye lit upon a shovel lying ready to his hand—I ran as nimbly as I could up the steep ladder, and gained the deck. Once there I paused and looked down. He was still standing by the lamp, staring up at me, doubt and chagrin plainly written on his face. Even as I watched him he rounded his lips to an oath; and then seemed to hold it over until he should be better assured of its necessity.

I thought no worse of him by reason of his revelations. In a country where the head of a custom house lives as a prince on the salary of a beggar, smuggling is no sin. But I was angry with him, and vexed with myself for the haste with which I had met his advances. I disliked and distrusted him. Whether he were mad, or took me for another smuggler—which seemed the most probable hypothesis—or had conceived some other false idea of me, whatever the key to the enigma of his manner might be, I felt sure I should do well to avoid him.

Like should mate with like, and I am not a violent man. I should not feel at home in a duel, though the part were played with the most domestic of fire shovels, much less with a horrible thing out of a stoke-hole.

About half-past ten, the San Miguel beginning to roll, I took the hint and went below. The small saloon was empty, the lamp turned down. As I passed the steward's pantry I looked in and begged a couple of biscuits. I am a fairly good sailor, but when things are bad my policy is comprised in 'berth and biscuits.' With this provision against misfortune, I retired to my cabin, luxuriating in the knowledge that it was a four-berth one, and that I was its sole occupant.

In truth I came near to chuckling as I looked round it. I did not need a certain experience I had had of a cabin three feet six inches wide by six feet three inches long, shared with a drunken Spaniard, to lead me to view with contentment my present quarters. A lamp in a glass case lighted at once the cabin and the passage outside, and so gave assurance that it would burn all night. On my right hand were an upper and lower berth, and on my left the same, with ample standing room between. A couch occupied the side facing me. The sliding door was supplemented by a curtain. I could hardly believe that this was all my own. What joy to one who had known other things, to arrange this and stow that, and fearlessly to place in the rack sponge and tooth-brush! What wonder if I blessed the firm of Segovia Quadra and Company as I sank back upon my well-hung mattress.

I sleep well at sea. The motion suits me. Even a qualm of sea-sickness does but induce a pleasant drowsiness. I love a snug berth under the porthole, and to hear the swish and wash of the water racing by, and the crisp plash as the vessel dips her forefoot under, and always the complaint of the stout timbers as they creak and groan in the bowels of the ship.

Cosy and warm, with these sounds for a lullaby, I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was again down in the engine-room, and sitting opposite to the other Englishman. 'Haven't you something to tell me? Haven't you something to tell me?' he was droning monotonously, wagging his head from side to side the while, with that same perplexing smile on his face which had so distressed me waking. 'Haven't you something to tell me?'

I strove to say that I had not, because I knew that if I did not satisfy him, he would do some dreadful thing, though what I did not know. But I could not utter the words, and while I was still struggling with this horrible impotency, that surpassed any waking misery, the thing was done. I was bound hand and foot to the crank of the engine, and going up and down with it, up

and down! Oh, it was fiendish cruelty! I wept and prayed to be released, but the villain took no heed of my prayers. He sat on, regarding my struggles with the same impassive smile. In despair I strove to think what it was he wanted—what it was—and——

How the ship was rolling! Thank heaven I was awake, or half awake! In my berth at any rate, and not in that horrible engine-room. But how was this? The other Englishman was here too, standing by the lamp, looking at me. Or—was it the other Englishman? It was someone who was not smiling, yet someone too who had a smudged and smutty face. All the wonder in my mind had to do with this question. I lay for a while in an indolent mood, between sleeping and waking, watching him. Then I saw him reach across my feet to a little shelf above the berth. As he drew back something that was in his hand—the hand that rested on the edge of my berth—glittered, glittered as the light fell upon it, and, wide awake, I sprang to a sitting posture in my berth, and cried out with fear.

He was gone on the instant, and in the same second of time I was out of bed and on the floor. A moment's hesitation, and I drew aside the curtain, which was still shaking. The passage without was still and empty. But opposite my cabin and separated from it only by the width of the passage was the door of another cabin, which was, or rather had been when I went to bed, unoccupied. Now the curtain drawn across the doorway was shaking, and I scarcely doubted but that the intruder was behind it. But behind it also was darkness, and I was unarmed, whereas that upon which the light had fallen in the man's hand was either a knife or a pistol.

No wonder that I hesitated, or that discretion seemed the better part of valour. To be sure I might call the steward and have the cabin searched, but I feared to seem afraid. I stood on tiptoe for a few moments listening. All was still; and presently I shivered. The excitement was passing away, I began to feel ill. With a last fearful glance at the opposite cabin—had I really seen the curtain shake? might it not have been caused by the motion of the ship?—I drew close my sliding door, and climbed hastily into my bunk. Robber or no robber I must lie still. In a very short time, what with my qualms and my drowsiness, I fell asleep.

I slept soundly until the morning light filled the cabin, and I was aroused by the cheery voice of the steward, bidding me

'Buenos dias.' The ship was moving on an even keel again. Overhead the deck was being swabbed. I opened my little window and looked out. As I did so the night's doings rose in my memory. But who could think of dreams or midnight assassins with the fresh sea air in his nostrils, and before his eyes that vignette of blue sea and grey rocks—grey, but sparkling, gemlike, ethereal under the sun of Spain? Not I, for one. I was gay as a lark, hungry as a hunter. Sallying out before I was dressed, I satisfied myself that the opposite cabin was empty and bare, and came back laughing at my folly.

But when I found that something else was empty and bare, I thought it no laughing matter. I wanted a biscuit to stay my appetite, until the steward should bring my 'café complet,' and I turned to the little shelf over my berth where I had placed them on going to bed. There were none there now. Curious! I had not eaten them. Then it flashed upon my mind that it was with this shelf my visitor had meddled.

After that I did not lose a moment. I examined my luggage and the pockets of my clothes; the result relieved as much as it astonished me; nothing was missing. My armed apparition had carried off two captain's biscuits, and nothing else whatever!

I passed the morning on deck puzzling over it. Sleigh did not come near me; was he conscious of guilt, I wondered, or offended at the abruptness of my leave-taking the night before, or was it merely that he was engaged about his work? I could not tell.

About noon we came to our moorings at Alicante. The sky was unclouded. The shabby town and the barren hills that rose behind it—barren to the eye, since the vines were not in leaf—looked baking hot. I had found a tolerably cool corner of the ship, and was amusing myself with a copy of 'Don Quixote' and a dictionary, when the engineer made his appearance.

'Not going ashore?' he said.

For the twentieth time I wondered what it was in his manner or voice that made everything he said to me seem a gibe. Whatever it was, I hated him for it, and I gave my feelings vent by answering sullenly, 'No, I am not,' and forthwith turning to my books again.

'I thought you travellers for pleasure wanted to see everything,' he continued. 'Maybe you know Alicante?'

'No, I don't,' I answered snappishly. 'And in this heat I do not want to know it!'

‘All right, governor, all right!’ he replied. ‘Think it might be too hot for you perhaps? Ho! ho! ho!’ And with a hoarse laugh that lasted him from stem to stern, and brought the blood to my cheeks, he left me. But I could see that he did not lose sight of me, and I heard him chuckling at intervals at his own wit for fully half an hour afterwards. Though where the joke came in, I could not for the life of me determine.

Towards evening I did go ashore, slipping away at a time when he had gone below for a moment. I found a public walk in an avenue of palm-trees which ran close by the sea. The palms were laden with clusters of yellow dates, that at first sight were more like dried sea-weed than fruit. As darkness fell, and with it coolness, I sat down here; and fell to watching the vessels in the port fade away one by one into the gloom, and little sparks of light take their places. A number of people were still out, enjoying the air, but these were sauntering, one and all, in the indolent southern fashion, so that on hearing the brisk step of a man approaching in haste, I looked up sharply. To my surprise, it was Sleigh, the engineer!

He passed close to me. I could not be mistaken, though he had put off his half-slouching, half-impudent air, and was keenly on the alert, glancing from this side to that, as if he were following or searching for some one. For whom? I was one of half a dozen on a seat in deep shadow. If I were the person he wanted—and I had leapt, at sight of him, to that conclusion, and cowered down in my place—he overlooked me, and went on. I sat some time longer after his step died away in the distance, my thoughts not altogether pleasant ones. But he did not return, and I went up to the Hôtel Bossio prepared to eat an excellent dinner.

The table d’hôte in the big whitewashed room was half finished. I was late. Perhaps this was why the waiters eyed me, as I took my seat, with attention; or it might be that the English were not numerous at Alicante, or not popular; or, again, it might be that some one—Mr. Sleigh, for example—had been there making inquiries for a foreigner—blonde, middle-sized, and speaking very little Spanish. Their notice made me uncomfortable. It seemed as if I could nowhere escape from my old man of the sea.

Nowhere indeed, for I was to have another *rencontre* that night, with which he may or may not have had to do, but which must be told because of the light afterwards thrown upon it.

Returning to my ship along the dark wharf, I here and there came upon figures loafing in the shadow of bales or barrels; and, passing them, clutched my loaded stick more tightly. I got by all these, however, in safety, and reached the spot where the ship lay. 'San Miguel! Bota!' I shouted in the approved fashion of that coast. 'San Miguel! Bota!'

The words had scarcely left my lips the second time when there was a rustling close to me. A single footstep sounded on the pebbles, and the light of a lantern was flashed in my face. With an exclamation I recoiled. As I did so two or three men sprang forward. Dazzled and taken by surprise, I had only an indistinct view of figures about me, and I was on the point of fighting or running, or making an attempt at both, when by good luck the clink of steel accoutrements fell upon my ear.

By good luck! For they were police who had stopped me, and it is ill work resisting the police in Spain. 'What do you require, gentlemen?' I asked in my best Spanish. 'I am English.'

'Perdone usted, señor,' replied the leader, he who held the light. 'Will you have the goodness to show me your papers?'

'Con mucho gusto!' I answered, delighted to find that things were no worse. I was going to produce my passport on the spot, when the sergeant, with a polite but imperative 'This way!' directed me to follow him. I did so for a short distance, a door was flung open, and I found myself in a well-lighted, barely-furnished office, which I guessed was a custom house post. The officer took his place behind a desk, and by a gesture of his cocked hat signified his readiness to proceed.

I had had to do with the police before, and should have smiled at the matter now, but I was aware of a suppressed excitement in the group around me, of strange glances which they cast at me, of a general drawing round their chief as he bent over my passport—things which seemed to indicate that this was no ordinary case of passport examination. Singular, too, was the disappointment they evinced when they found that my passport bore, besides the ordinary visé, the signatures of the Vice-Consul and Alcalde at Valencia. Of course, as their faces fell my spirits rose. A deep conviction and deeper disappointment took possession of them, and, after I had answered half a dozen questions, the interview ended with the same 'Perdone usted, señor,' with which it had begun. I was bowed out; a boat was instantly procured for me,

and in two minutes more I was climbing the ladder which hung from the San Miguel's quarter.

The first person whom I saw on board was Mr. Sleigh. He was lolling on a bench in the saloon—confound his impudence!—drinking aguardiente and staring moodily at the table. I tried to pass him by, and reach my cabin unnoticed, but on the last step of the companion I slipped. With a muttered oath at the interruption he looked up, and our eyes met.

Never did I see a man more astonished. He gazed at me as if he could not trust his sight; then started to his feet and executed a loud whistle. 'Well, I never!' he cried, slapping his thigh with another oath, and speaking in a coarse jubilant tone. 'Well, I am blest, governor! So you did not go ashore after all! Here is a lark!'

I saw that he had been drinking. 'I have been ashore,' I answered coldly, my dislike for him increased tenfold by his condition.

'Honour bright?' he exclaimed.

'I have told you that I have been ashore,' I replied indignantly.

He whistled again. 'You are a cool hand,' he said, looking me over with his thumbs in his pockets and a new expression in his face. 'I might have known that though, precious mild as you seemed! Dined at the Hôtel Bossio, I'll warrant you did, and took your walk in the Alameda like any other man?'

'Yes, I did.'

'So you did! O Lord! O Lord! So you did!' And again he contemplated me at arm's length. I could construe his new expression now—it was one of admiration. 'So you did, governor! And came aboard in the dark, as bold as brass!'

That thawed me a little. I thought myself that I had done rather a plucky thing in coming on board alone at that time of night. But I told him nothing, in his present state, of the affair with the police. I merely answered, 'I do not understand why I should not, Mr. Sleigh. And as I am rather tired, I will bid you good night.'

'Wait a bit, governor. Not so fast,' he said, in a lower tone, arresting me by a gesture as I was turning away. 'Don't you think you are playing it a bit too high? You are a rare cool one, I swear, and fly—there is nothing you are not fly to, I'll be bound! But two heads are better than one, mate—you take me?'

—letting alone that it is every one for himself in this world. Do you rise to it?’

‘No, I do not rise to it,’ I answered haughtily, as I drew back from his spirituous breath and leering eyes. He was more drunk than I had fancied.’

‘You don’t? Think again, mate,’ he said, almost as if he were pleading with me. ‘Don’t play it too high.’

‘Don’t talk such confounded nonsense!’ I retorted angrily.

He looked at me yet a moment, a scowl dropping gradually over his face and not improving it. Then he answered, ‘All right, governor! All right! Pleasant dreams! and a pleasant waking at Carthagena!’

‘I have no doubt I shall enjoy both,’ I replied, smarting under his mocking tone; and added, as his words brought another matter to my mind, ‘That is, if you will have the goodness not to disturb me as you did last night!’ He should not think he had escaped detection.

‘It is your turn now,’ he replied more soberly. ‘I don’t know what you are up to now. I did not disturb you last night.’

‘Some one did! Some one uncommonly like you too.’

‘What did he do?’ he asked, eyeing me as though he suspected a trap were being laid for him.

‘I startled him,’ I answered irritably, ‘or I do not know what he would not have done. As it was he did not do much. He took some biscuits.’

‘Took some biscuits!’ He pretended that he did not believe me, and he did it so well that I began to doubt his guilt. ‘You must have been dreaming, mate.’

‘I could not dream the biscuits away,’ I retorted.

That stroke went home. He stood in silence drawing patterns on the table with his finger and a puddle of spilled water. Guilty or innocent, he did not seem ashamed of himself, but rather puzzled and perplexed. Once or twice, without speaking, he glanced cunningly at me. But whether he wished to see how I took it, or really suspected me of fooling him, I could not tell.

‘Good night!’ I cried impatiently; and I went to my cabin. I had told him my mind and that was enough. The last I saw of him, he was still standing at the table, drawing patterns on it with his finger.

I turned in at once, satisfied that after what had passed between us there would be no repetition of last night’s disturbance.

In a pleasant state between waking and sleeping I was aware of the tramp of feet overhead as the moorings were let go. The first slow motion of the engines was followed by the old familiar swish and wash of the water sliding by. Then the ship began to heel over a little. We had reached the open sea. After that I slept.

I awoke suddenly: awoke in the full possession of my senses. The cabin was still lit only by the lamp. I guessed that it was little after midnight; and lay a while execrating the disordered health which made such an awakening no new thing. '*O utinam!*' I sighed, 'that I had not taken that cup of coffee after dinner!' My portmanteau too had got loose. I could hear it sliding about the floor, though, as I was lying in the upper berth, I could not see it. That I would soon set to rights.

Accordingly I vaulted out after my usual fashion. But instead of alighting fairly and squarely on the floor, my bare feet struck against something—something soft, a good distance short of it, and I came down smartly on my hands and knees—to form part of the queerest tableau upon which even a cabin-lamp ever shone. There was I, lightly clothed in pyjamas, glaring into the eyes of a dingy-faced man, who was likewise down on his hands and knees on the floor—with more than half the breath knocked out of his body by my descent upon him. I do not know which was the more astonished.

'Hallo! how do you come here?' I exclaimed, after we had stared at one another for some seconds.

He raised his hand fiercely. 'Hush!' he whispered: and obeying his word and gesture I crouched where I was, while he seemed to listen. Then we rose silently to our feet as by one motion. I had not time to feel afraid, though it was far from a pretty countenance that was so close to mine. Rage and terror were written too plainly upon it.

'You are English?' he said sullenly.

I said I was. Although I saw that he had a pistol half-concealed behind him, I somehow felt master of the position. His fear of being overheard seemed so much greater than my fear of his pistol, and it is not easy to do much with a pistol without being overheard. 'You are English too, I can see,' I added, below my breath. 'Perhaps you will kindly tell me what you are doing in my cabin?'

'You will not betray me?' he said irresolutely.

'Betray you, my man! If you have taken nothing of mine,' I replied, with a prudent remembrance of his weapon and the late hour of the night, 'you may go to the deuce for me, so long as you don't pay me another visit.'

'Taken anything!' he cried, forgetting his caution, and raising his voice, 'do you take me for a thief? I will be bound—' he went on bitterly, yet with a pride that seemed to me very pitiable when I understood it—that you are about the only man in Spain who would not know me at sight. There is a price upon my head! There are two thousand pesetas for whoever takes me dead or alive! There are bills of me in every town in Spain! Ay, of me! in every town from Irun to Malaga!'

The wretched braggart! I knew now who he was. 'You were at Carthagena,' I said sternly, thinking of the old grey-headed general who had died at his post.

He nodded. The momentary excitement faded quickly from his face, leaving him to appear again what he was, a man dirty, pallid, half-famished. About my height, he wore also clothes, shabby and soiled indeed, but like mine in make and material. In his desperate desire for sympathy, for communion with some one, he had already laid aside any fear of me. When I asked him how he came to be in my cabin, he told me freely.

'I intended to ship from Valencia to France, but they watched and searched all the boats. I crept on board this one in the night, thinking that as she was bound for Carthagena she would not be searched. I was right; they did not think anyone would venture back into the lion's jaws.'

'But what will you do when we reach Carthagena?' I asked.

'Stay on board and, if possible, go with this ship to Cadiz. From there I can easily get over to Tangier,' he answered.

It sounded feasible. 'And where have you been since we left Valencia?' I asked.

'Behind this sailcloth.' He pointed to a long roll of spare canvas which was stowed away between the floor and the lower berth. I opened my eyes.

'Ay!' he added with a grimace, 'they are close quarters, but there is just room behind there for a man lying on his face. What is more, except your two biscuits I have had nothing to eat since the day before yesterday.'

'Then it was you who took the biscuits?' I said.

He nodded; then he fell back against my berth, all his

strength gone out of him. For from behind us came another—a more emphatic answer. ‘You may take your oath to that, governor!’ it ran; and briskly pushing aside the door and curtain, Sleigh the engineer stood before us. ‘You may bet upon that, I guess!’ he added, an ugly smile playing about his mouth and eyes.

The refugee’s face changed to a sickly white, and his hand toyed feebly with the pistol, but he did not move. I think that we both felt we were in the presence of a stronger mind.

‘You had better put that plaything away,’ said Sleigh. He showed no fear, but I observed that he was watching us narrowly. ‘A shot would bring the ship about your ears, my friend. There is no call for a long explanation. I took the governor here for you, but when he told me that someone was stealing his biscuits, I thought I had got the right pig by the ear, and five minutes outside this door have made it a certainty. Two thousand pesetas! Why, hang me if I should have thought, to look at you, that you were worth half the money!’ he added brutally.

The other plucked up spirit at this insult. ‘Who are you? What do you want?’ he cried, with an attempt at bravado.

‘Precisely. What do I want?’ replied the engineer with a sneer. ‘You are right to come to business. What do I want? A hundred pounds. That is my price, mate. Fork it out and mum is the word. Turn rusty, and——’ He did not finish the sentence, but grasping his neck in both hands, pressed his thumbs upon his windpipe and dropped his jaw. It was a ghastly performance. I had seen a garotte, and I shuddered.

‘You would not give the man up? Your own countryman?’ I cried in horror.

‘Would I not?’ he answered ruthlessly. ‘You will soon see, if he has not got the cash!’

‘A hundred pounds!’ moaned the wretched fellow, whom Sleigh’s performance had completely unmanned. ‘I have not a hundred pesetas with me.’

As it happened—alas, it has often happened so with me!—I had but some three hundred pesetas, some twelve pounds odd, about me, nor any hope of a remittance nearer than Malaga, whither I was on my way. Still I did what I could. ‘Look here, I said to Sleigh, ‘I can hardly believe that you are in earnest, but I will do this. I will give you ten pounds to be silent and let this man take his chance. It is no good to haggle with me,’ I added, ‘because I have no more.’

'Ten pounds!' he replied derisively, 'when the police will give me eighty! I am not such a fool.'

'Better ten pounds as a gift than eighty pounds of blood money,' I retorted.

'Look here, Mister,' he answered sternly; 'do you mind your own business and let us settle ours. I am sorry for you, mate, that is a fact, but I cannot let the chance pass. If I do not get this money, someone else will. I'll tell you what I will do, though.' As he paused I breathed again, while the miserable man whose life was in the balance glanced up with renewed hope. 'I will lower my terms,' he went on. 'I would rather get the money honestly myself, I am free to confess that. If you will out with two thousand pesetas, I will keep my mouth shut, and give you a helping hand besides.'

'If not?' I said.

'If not,' he answered, shrugging his shoulders—and I noticed that he laid his hand on his knife—'if you do not accept my terms before we are in port at Carthagena, I go to the first policeman and tell him who is aboard. Those are my terms, and you have until then to think about them.'

With that he left the cabin, warily, and with his face to us to the last. Hateful and treacherous as he was—I loathed him so that I could scarcely meet his eyes—I could not help admiring his perfect coolness and courage, and his quick grasp of the men he had to do with.

For I felt when he was gone that we were a sorry pair. I suppose that my companion, bad as his case had seemed before, had yet cherished strong hopes of escape. Now he was utterly unmanned. He sat on the couch, his elbows on his knees, his head resting on his hands, the picture of despair. The pistol had disappeared into some pocket, and although capture meant death, I judged that he would let himself be taken without striking a blow.

My own reflections were far from being of a comfortable nature. The man grovelling there before me might deserve death; knowing the stakes, he had gambled and lost. Moreover, he was a complete stranger to me. But he was an Englishman. He had trusted me. He had spent—well, an hour, but it seemed many—in my company, and I shrank from the horror of seeing him dragged away to a violent death. My nature so revolted against it that I forgot what the consequences to myself of interference might be.

‘Look here,’ I said, after a long interval of silence, ‘I will do what I can to help you. We shall not reach Carthagena until eight o’clock at earliest. Something may turn up before that time. At the worst I have a scheme, though I set little store by it, and advise you to do the same. Put on these clothes in place of those you wear.’ I handed to him a suit taken from my portmanteau. ‘Wash and shave. Take my passport and papers. It is just possible that if you play your part well they may not identify you, and may arrest me, despite our friend upstairs. For myself, once on shore I shall have no difficulty in proving my innocence.’

Not that I was without my misgivings. The Spanish civil guards have the name of giving but short shrift at times, and even at the best I might be punished for connivance at an escape. But to some extent I trusted to my nationality; and for the rest, the avidity with which the hunted wretch at my side clutched at the slender hope my offer held out to him, drove any last hesitation from my mind.

As long as I live I shall remember the scene which ensued. The grey light was beginning to steal through the port-hole, giving a sicklier hue to my companion’s features, and making my own trembling fingers as I helped him to dress seem to myself strangely wan and thin. A heavy odour from the expiring lamp hung upon the air. The tumbled bed-clothes, the ransacked luggage, the coats swaying against the bulkheads to the music of the creaking timbers, formed an entourage deeply imprinted on the memory.

About seven o’clock I procured some coffee and biscuits and a little fruit, and fed him. Then I gave him my passport and papers, and charged him to employ himself naturally about the cabin. My own plan was to be out of the way, ashore or elsewhere, when Sleigh should spring his mine, and to trust my companion to return my luggage and papers to my hotel at Malaga, until I reached which place I must take my chance. I may seem to have been playing a fine and magnanimous part, but, looking back now, I do not think that I believed for a moment that the police would be deceived.

A little after eight o’clock I went on deck, to find that the ship was steaming slowly in between the fortified hills that frown upon the harbour of Carthagena; a harbour so grand and spacious that in its amphitheatre of waters I fancy all the navies of the world might lie. For a time the engineer was not visible on deck. The steward had pointed out to me some of the lions—the deeply embayed arsenal, the distant fort, high-perched on a hill,

which the mutineers had seized, and the governor's house over the gateway where the wounded general had died—and we were within a couple of hundred yards of the wharf, crowded with idlers and flecked with sentinels, when Sleigh came up from below.

Although the morning was fine and warm, he was wearing the heavy pea-jacket which I had seen in the engine-room. He cast a spiteful glance at me, and then, turning away, affected to busy himself with other matters. I think that he was ashamed of the work he had in hand. Bad as he was, I think so.

‘Do we stay here all day?’ I asked the steward.

‘No, señor, no. Hasta las diez solo,’ I understood him to say. Only until ten o'clock, and it was close upon nine already. He explained that the town was yet so much disturbed that business was at a standstill. The San Miguel would merely land her passengers by boat and go on at once to Almeria, where much cargo awaited her. ‘Here is the police-boat coming,’ he added.

Then the time had come too. I was quivering with excitement—and with something else—a new idea! Darting from the steward's side, I flew down the stairs, through the saloon and to my cabin, the door of which I dragged aside impatiently. ‘Give me my passport—my papers!’ I cried, breathless with haste, ‘the police are here!’

The man—he was pretending to pack with his back to the door, but at my entrance rose with an assumption of ease—drew back. ‘Why? will you desert me too?’ he muttered, his face working piteously. ‘Will you betray me? Then, my God! I am lost!’ and he flung himself upon the sofa in a paroxysm of terror.

Every moment was of priceless value. This a conspirator, indeed! I had no patience with him. ‘Give them to me!’ I cried imperatively, desperately. ‘I have another plan. Do you hear?’

He heard, but he did not believe me. He was sure that my courage had failed me at the last moment. But—and let this be written on his side of the account—he gave me the papers; it may be in pure generosity, it may be because he had not the spirit to resist.

Armed with them I ran on deck almost as quickly as I had descended. I found the position of things but slightly changed. The police-boat was now alongside. The officer in command, attended by two or three subordinates, was coming up the ladder.

Close to the gangway Sleigh was standing, evidently waiting for this group. But he had his eye on the saloon door also, for I had scarcely emerged from the latter when he stepped up to me.

'Have you changed your mind, governor? Are you going to buy him off?' he muttered, looking askance at me as I still moved forward with him by my side.

My answer took him by surprise. 'No, señor, no!' I exclaimed loudly and repeatedly—so loudly that the attention of the group at the gangway was drawn towards us. When I saw that this was effected, I stepped hastily in front of Sleigh, and before he had any clear notion of what I was doing, I was at the officer's side. 'Sir,' I said, raising my hat, 'do you speak French?'

'Parfaitement, monsieur,' he answered, politely returning my salute.

'I am an Englishman, and I wish to lay an information,' I said, speaking in French, and pausing there that I might look at Sleigh. As I had expected, he did not understand French. His baffled and perplexed face assured me of that. He tried to interrupt me, but the courteous official waved him aside.

'This man here who is trying to shut my mouth is a smuggler of foreign watches,' I resumed rapidly. 'He has them about him now, and is going to take them ashore. They are in a number of pockets made for the purpose in the lining of his coat. I am connected with the watch trade, and my firm will give ten pounds reward to anyone who will capture and prosecute him.'

'I understand,' replied the officer. And, turning to Sleigh, who, shut out from the knowledge of what was going forward, was fretting and fuming in a fever of distrust, he addressed some words to him. He spoke in Spanish and quickly, and I could not understand what he said. That it was to the point, however, the engineer's face betrayed. It fell amazingly on the instant, and he cast a vengeful glance at me.

That which followed was ludicrous enough. My heart was beating fast, but I could not suppress a smile as Sleigh, clasping the threatened coat about him, backed from the police. He poured out a torrent of fluent Spanish, and emphatically denied, it was clear, the charge; but, alas! he cherished the coat—at which the police were making tentative dives—overmuch for an innocent man with no secret pockets about him.

His 'No, señor, no!' his 'Por dios!' and 'Madre de Dios!'

and the rest, were breath wasted. At a sign from the now grim-looking officer, two of the policemen deftly seized him, and in a twinkling, notwithstanding his resistance, had the thick coat off him, and were probing its recesses. It was the turn of the bystanders to cry, 'Madre de Dios!' as from pocket upon pocket came watch after watch, until five dozen lay in sparkling rows upon the deck. I could see that there were those among the ship's company besides the culprit who gazed at me with little favour; but the eyes of the police officer twinkled with gratification as each second added to the rich prize. And that was enough for me.

Still I knew that all was not done yet, and I watched keenly what was passing. Sleigh, taken into custody, had desisted from his disjointed prayers and oaths. I perceived, however, that he was telling a long story, of which I could make out little more than the word 'Inglese' repeated more than once. It was his turn now. If he had not understood my French, neither could I understand his Spanish. And I noticed that the officer, as the story rolled on, looked at me doubtfully. I judged that the crisis had come, and I interfered. 'May I beg to know, sir, what he says?' I asked courteously.

'He tells me a strange story, Mr. Englishman,' was the answer; and the speaker eyed me with curiosity but not unfavourably. 'He says that Morrissey, the villainous Englishman—your pardon—who was at the bottom of the affair of last Sunday, has had the temerity to return to the scene of his crime, and is on this vessel.'

I shrugged my shoulders. 'A strange story, indeed!' I answered. 'But it is for Monsieur to do his duty. I am the only Englishman on board, as the steward will inform you; and for me, permit me to hand you my papers. Your prisoner wishes, no doubt, to be even with me!'

He nodded brusquely as he took the papers. That upon which I had counted happened. The engineer in his rage and excitement had not made his story plain. No one dreamt of his charge being aimed against another Englishman. No one knew of another Englishman. The steward sullenly corroborated me when I said I was the only one on board, and so all who heard Sleigh—slightly befogged, perhaps, by his Spanish, which, good enough for ordinary occasions, may have failed him here—did not doubt that his was a pure counter-accusation preferred *en revanche*.

No doubt the improbability of Morrissey's return had some weight with them. Then my credentials were ample and in order. Among them, too, a note for 250 pesetas had somehow slipped, which had disappeared when they were handed back to me. Need I say after this how it ended? Or that while the police officer bowed his courteous 'Adios' to me, and his men gathered up the watches, and the crew scowled, the prisoner was removed by force to the boat fairly foaming at the mouth, and screaming out to the last horrible threats which my ears were long in forgetting. I walked up and down the deck, brazening it out, but very sick at heart.

However, the San Miguel, despite her engineer's mishap, duly left in half an hour—a nervous half-hour to me. With a thankful heart I watched the fort-crowned hills about Carthagena change from brown to blue, and blue to purple, behind us, until at length they sank down in the distance.

But officers and men looked coldly on me; and that evening, at Almeria, I took up bag and baggage and left the San Miguel. I had had enough of the thanks, and more than enough of the company, of my cabin-fellow, whom I left where I had found him—or nearly so—behind the sailcloth. I believe that he succeeded in making his escape: not that I have since seen him or heard from him. But fully a month later a friend of mine staying at the Hôtel de la Paz, at Madrid, was placed under arrest for some hours on suspicion of being Morrissey; so that the latter must at that time have been at liberty.

NOT SEER, BUT SINGER.

POET thou art, not Prophet! Darkly great,
 Portentous, looms the age that is to be,
 With tottering thrones, decrepit tyranny,
 Clash open of the grim Past's prison-gate
 Whence march the people to their ultimate
 Dim land of promise. Ah! 'tis not for thee
 To stem the omnipotent course of liberty,
 Or bless or curse this swift advancing fate.
 Not in the din, the fever of the fray,
 With misplaced energy and ill-spent skill,
 Canst thou the mission of thy life fulfil;
 'Mid the hoarse tumult dies thy song away.
 Never could tongue, however mighty, will
 The sun of human progress to stand still.

Interpreter not teacher! A dumb world—
 The secret inarticulate soul of each
 Awaits the unfolding miracle of speech;
 With ancient longings have the leaves uncurled,
 The fleecy mantle of the ferns unfurled;
 Spring is a subtle text from which to preach
 Sweet sermons of delight that all may reach;
 For thee the purple hills with mists are pearly
 Calm amidst clamorous change doth Nature hold
 Eternal verities. May skies are blue,
 Still falls on April blossoms April dew—
 Seed-time and harvest fail not as of old,
 Though empires tremble. Earth is ever new
 With immemorial wisdom to a few!

COUNTRY DANCES.

CLISTHENES, tyrant of Sicyon, says Herodotus, had a beautiful daughter whom he resolved to marry to the most accomplished of the Greeks. Accordingly all the eligible young men of Greece resorted to the court of Sicyon to offer for the hand of the lovely Agarista. Among these, the most distinguished was Hippoclidès, and the king decided to take him as his son-in-law.

Clisthenes had already invited the guests to the nuptial feast, and had slaughtered one hundred oxen to the gods to obtain a blessing on the union, when Hippoclidès offered to exhibit the crown and climax of his many accomplishments.

He ordered a flute-player to play a dance tune, and when the musician obeyed, he (Hippoclidès) began to dance before the king and court and guests, and danced to his own supreme satisfaction.

After the first bout, and he had rested awhile and recovered breath, he ordered a table to be introduced, and he danced figures on it, and finally set his head on the table and gesticulated with his legs.

When the applause had ceased, Clisthenes said—as the young man had reverted to his feet and stood expectantly before him—‘You have danced very well, but I don’t want a dancing son-in-law.’

How we should like to know what Herodotus does not tell us, whether the tyrant of Sicyon was of a sour and puritanical mind, objecting to dancing on principle, or whether he objected to the peculiar kind of dance performed by Hippoclidès, notably that with his head on the table and his legs kicking in the air.

I do not think that such a thing existed at that period as puritanical objection to dancing, but that it was the sort of dance which offended Clisthenes. Lucian in one of his Dialogues introduces a philosopher who reproaches a friend for being addicted to dancing, whereupon the other replies that dancing was of divine invention, for the goddess Rhæa first composed set dances about the infant Jupiter to hide him from the eyes of his father Saturn, who wanted to eat him. Moreover, Homer speaks with high respect of dancing, and declares that the grace and nimbleness of Merion in the dance distinguished him above the

rest of the heroes in the contending hosts of Greeks and Trojans. He adds that in Greece statues were erected to the honour of the best dancers, so highly was the art held in repute, and that Hesiod places on one footing valour and dancing, when he says that 'The gods have bestowed fortitude on some men, and on others a disposition for dancing!' Lastly, he puts the philosopher in mind that Socrates not only admired the saltatory exercise in others, but learned it himself when he was an old man.

On hearing this defence of dancing, the morose philosopher in Lucian's Dialogue professes himself a convert, and requests his friend to take him to the next subscription ball.

Steele, in the 'Spectator,' declared that 'no one ever was a good dancer that had not a good understanding,' and that it is an art whereby mechanically, so to speak, 'a sense of good-breeding and virtue are insensibly implanted in minds not capable of receiving it so well in any other rules.'

I cannot help thinking that the dancing commended by the 'Spectator,' learned in old age by Socrates, and that in which the Greeks won the honour of statues, was something far removed from that which incurred the displeasure of Clisthenes, and lost Hippoclidides the hand of his beautiful mistress.

Here is a letter in the 'Spectator,' given in Steele's article. It purports to be from a father, Philipater: 'I am a widower with one daughter; she was by nature much inclined to be a romp, and I had no way of educating her, but commanding a young woman, whom I entertained to take care of her, to be very watchful in her care and attendance about her. I am a man of business and obliged to be much abroad. The neighbours have told me, that in my absence our maid has let in the spruce servants in the neighbourhood to junketings, while my girl play'd and romped even in the street. To tell you the plain truth, I caught her once, at eleven years old, at chuck-farthing, among the boys. This put me upon new thoughts about my child, and I determined to place her at a boarding-school. I took little notice of my girl from time to time, but saw her now and then in good health, out of harm's way, and was satisfied. But by much importunity, I was lately prevailed with to go to one of their balls. I cannot express to you the anxiety my silly heart was in, when I saw my romp, now fifteen, taken out. I could not have suffered more, had my whole fortune been at stake. My girl came on with the most becoming modesty I had ever seen, and casting a respectful

eye, as if she feared me more than all the audience, I gave a nod, which, I think, gave her all the spirit she assumed upon it, but she rose properly to that dignity of aspect. My romp, now the most graceful person of her sex, assumed a majesty which commanded the highest respect. You, Mr. Spectator, will, better than I can tell you, imagine all the different beauties and changes of aspect in an accomplished young woman, setting forth all her beauties with a design to please no one so much as her father. My girl's lover can never know half the satisfaction that I did in her that day. I could not possibly have imagined that so great improvement could have been wrought by an art that I always held in itself ridiculous and contemptible. There is, I am convinced, no method like this, to give young women a sense of their own value and dignity; and I am sure there can be none so expeditious to communicate that value to others. For my part, my child has danced herself into my esteem, and I have as great an honour of her as ever I had for her mother, from whom she derived those latent good qualities which appeared in her countenance when she was dancing; for my girl showed in one quarter of an hour the innate principles of a modest virgin, a tender wife, and generous friend, a kind mother, and an indulgent mistress.' It is a curious fact that the beautiful and graceful dance, the dance as a fine art, is extinct among us. It has been expelled by the intrusive waltz. And if in the waltz any of that charm of modesty, grace of action, and dignity of posture can be found, which delighted our forefathers and made them esteem dancing, then let it be shown. It was not waltzing which made Merion to be esteemed among the heroes of the Trojan war, it was not waltzing certainly that Socrates acquired in his old age, and it most assuredly was not whilst waltzing that the correspondent of the 'Spectator' admired in his daughter the modest virgin. It is possible that it was a sort of waltz which Hippocles performed and which lost him the daughter of Clisthenes.

The dance is not properly the spinning around of two persons of opposite sex, hugging each other, and imitating the motion of a teetotum. The dance is an assemblage of graceful movements and figures performed by a set number of persons. There is singular beauty in the dance proper. The eye is pleased by a display of graceful and changing outline, by bringing into play the muscles of well-moulded limbs. But where many performers take part the enchantment is increased, just as part-singing is

more lovely than solo-singing, for to the satisfaction derived from the graceful attitude of one performer is added that of beautiful grouping. A single well-proportioned figure is a goodly sight; several well-proportioned figures in shifting groups, now in clusters, now swinging loose in wreaths, now falling into line, or circles, whilst an individual, or a pair, focus the interest, is very beautiful. It is the change in a concert from chorus to solo; and when, whilst the single dance, projected into prominence, attracts the delighted eye, the rest of the dancers keep rhythmic motion, subdued, in simple change, the effect is exquisite. It is the accompaniment on a living instrument to a solo.

A correspondent of the 'Times' recently gave us an account of the Japanese ballet, which illustrates what I insist on. He tells us that the Maikos or Japanese ballet-dancers are girls of from sixteen to eighteen years of age; they wear long fine silk dresses, natural flowers in their hair, and hold fans in their hands. Their dance is perfectly decorous, exquisitely graceful, and of marvellous artistic beauty. It partakes of the nature of the minuet and the gavotte; it makes no violent demands on lungs and muscles; its object is to give pleasure to the spectators through the exhibition of harmony of lines, elegance of posture, beauty of dress, grace with which the folds of the long drapery fall, the play of light, and change of arrangement of colour. It is a dance full of noble and stately beauty and has nothing in common with our European ballet, with its extravagance and indelicacy, and—it must be added—inelegance. It is a play without words, and a feast of pure delight to the artistic eye.

Æsthetically, the dance is, or may be, one of the most beautiful creations of man, an art, and an art of no mean order. In it each man and woman has to sustain a part, is one of many, a member of a company, enchaind to it by laws which all must obey. And yet each has in his part a certain scope for individual expansion, for the exercise of liberty. It is a figure of the world of men, in which each has a part to perform in relation to all the rest. If the performer uses his freedom in excess, the dancers in the social ball are thrown into disorder, and the beauty and unity of the performance is lost.

Now all this beauty is taken from us. The waltz has invaded our ball-rooms and drives all other dances out of it. Next to the polka the waltz is the rudest and most elementary of step and figure dances; it has extirpated before it the lovely and intricate

dances, highly artistic, and of elaborate organisation, which were performed a century ago. How is it now in a ball? Even the quadrille and lancers, the sole remnants of an art beautiful to lookers-on, are sat out, or, after having been entered on the list, are omitted, and a waltz substituted for it. 'Valse, valse, toujours valse!' A book on dances, published in 1821, speaks of the introduction of the waltz as a new thing, and of the rarity of finding persons at a ball who could dance it.

'The company at balls having no partners who are acquainted with waltzing or quadrilles, generally become spectators of each other in a promenade round the rooms, so that the waltz or quadrille ball ends in country dances, sometimes not one of these dances being performed during the evening.' That was a little over sixty years ago. Waltz and quadrille came in hand-in-hand, and displaced the old artistic and picturesque country dances, and then waltz prevailed and kicked quadrille out at the door. The country dance is the old English dance, the dance of our forefathers—the dance which worked such wonders in the heart of the old father in Steele's papers in the 'Spectator.'

The country dance has nothing to do with the country; it has no smack of rusticity about it. The designation is properly *contre-danse*, or counter-dance, and is given to all that class of dances which are performed by the gentlemen standing on one side and the ladies on the other in lines. The quadrille—a square dance—does not belong to it, nor any of those figures where the performers stand in a circle. As a general rule, foreign dances are circular or square. In Brittany is *La Boulangère*, and in the South of France *La Tapageuse*, which are set in lines; but with a few exceptions most continental dances are square or round; the speciality of the English dance was that it was counter. Probably all old dances in this country, with the exception of reels, were so set. A writer at the beginning of this century said: 'An English country dance differs from any other known dance in form and construction, except *Ecossaise* and quadrille country dances, as most others composed of a number of persons are either round, octagon, circular, or angular. The pastoral dances on the stage approximate the nearest to English country dances, being formed longways.'

The number of performers was unlimited, but could not consist of less than six. An English country dance was composed of the putting together of several figures, and it allowed of almost

infinite variation, according to the number and arrangement of the figures introduced. Sir Roger de Coverley, which is not quite driven out, consists of seven figures. Some figures are quite elementary, as turning the partner, setting, leading down the middle. Others are more elaborate, as Turn Corners, and Swing Corners; some are called Short Figures, as requiring in their performance a whole strain of short measure, or half a strain of long measure. Long Figures, on the other hand, occupy a strain of eight bars in long measure—a strain being that part of an air which is terminated by a double bar, and usually consists in country dances of four, eight, or sixteen single bars. Country dance tunes usually consist of two strains, though they sometimes extend to three, four, or five, and of eight bars each.

The names and character of the old country dances are quite forgotten.

The following is a list of some of the dances given in 'The Complete Country Dancing Master,' published near the beginning of last century:—

Whitehall	The Whirligig
Ackroyd's Pad	Amarillis
Buttered Pease	Sweet Kate
Bravo and Florimel	Granny's Delight
Pope Joan	Essex Buildings
Have at thy coat, old woman	Lord Byron's Maggot
The Battle of the Boyne	Ballamera
The Gossip's Frolic	The Dumps
The Intrigue	Rub her down with straw
Prince and Princess	Moll Peatley
A Health to Betty	Cheerily and Merrily.
Bobbing Joan	

In Waylet's 'Collection of Country Dances,' published in 1749, we have these:—

The Lass of Livingstone	Bonny Lass
Highland Laddie	The Grasshopper
Down the Burn, Davy	The Pallet
Eltham Assembly	Jack Lattin
Cephalus and Procris	Farinelle's Maggot
Joy go with her	Buttered Pease
Duke of Monmouth's Jig	The Star.

Some of these dances were simplicity itself, consisting of only a very few elementary figures. This is the description of 'Sweet Kate.'

'Lead up all a double and back. That again. Set your right foot to your woman's, then your left, clasp your woman on her

right hand, then on the left, wind your hands and hold up your finger, wind your hands again and hold up another finger of the other hand, then single; and all this again.'

'Bobbing Joan' is no more than this. First couple dances between the second, which then take their places, dance down, hands and all round, first two men snap fingers and change places, first women do the same, these two changes to the last, and the rest follow.

The tune of 'The Triumph' is still found in collections of dance music, but it is only here and there in country places that it can be performed. We saw some old villagers of sixty and seventy years of age dance it last Christmas, but no young people knew anything about it. It is a slight, easy but graceful dance—graceful when not danced by old gaffers and grannies.

Very probably one reason of the disapproval which country dancing has encountered arises from the fact that it allows no opportunities of conversation and consequently of flirtation, as the partners stand opposite each other, and in the figures take part with other performers quite as much as with their own proper *vis-à-vis*. But then is a dance arranged simply to enable a young pair to clasp each other and whisper into each other's ears? Are art, beauty, pleasure to the spectators to be left out of count altogether? The wall-fruit are deserving of commiseration, for they now see nothing that can gratify the eye in a ball-room; the waltz has been like the Norwegian rat—it has driven the native out altogether, and the native dance and the native rat were the more beautiful of the two.

It is not often we get a graceful dance on the stage either. Country dancing is banished thence also; the minuet and distorted antics that are without grace, and of scanty decency, have supplanted it.

It seems incredible that what was regarded as a necessary acquisition of every lady and gentleman sixty or seventy years ago should have gone, and gone utterly—so utterly that probably dancing-masters of the present day would not know how to teach the old country dances. In 'The Complete System of Country Dancing, by Thomas Wilson,' published about 1821 (there is no date on the title-page), the author insists on this being the national dance of the English, of its being in constant practice, of its being a general favourite 'in every city and town throughout the United Kingdom;' as constituting 'the principal amuse-

ment with the greater part of the inhabitants of this country.' Not only so, but the English country dance was carried to all the foreign European Courts, where it 'was very popular, and became the most favourite species of dancing;' and yet it is gone—gone utterly.

The minuet was, no doubt, a tedious and over-formal dance; it was only tolerable when those engaged wore hoops and powder and knee-breeches; but the English country dance is not stiff at all, and only so far formal as all complications of figures must be formal. It is at the same time infinitely elastic, for it allows of expansion or contraction by the addition or subtraction of figures. There are about a hundred figures in all, and these can be changed in place like the pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope.

Why, in this age of revivals, when we fill our rooms with Chippendale furniture and rococo mirrors and inlaid Florentine cabinets, and use the subdued colours of our grandmothers, when our books are printed in old type with head and tail pieces of two centuries ago, when the edges are left in the rough—why should we allow the waltz, the foreign waltz, to monopolise our ball-rooms to the exclusion of all beautiful figure-dancing, and let an old English art disappear completely without an attempt to recover it? It will be in these delightful, graceful, old national dances that our girls will, like the daughter of Philipater in the 'Spectator,' dance themselves into our esteem, as it is pretty sure that in the approved fashion of waltzing they will dance themselves out of it.

A PIRATICAL F.S.A.

A SHORT time ago, Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A., of England, carried on excavations on Egyptian soil, with the full permission of H. H. the Khedive not only to dig, but to appropriate their finds. The astute Turk kept quiet for a time, and allowed them to spend their money and their labour; but at the last moment, when the treasure-trove was neatly packed and ready for exportation, down he bore upon them, saying 'Inasmuch as we are suzerains of Egypt, this treasure-trove belongs to us,' and, acting on this principle, he removed all the F. S. A.'s spoil to Constantinople. Being unable to obtain leave from the aforesaid Turk for anything like a favourable continuation of their work, Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. determined to become pirates, and, unfettered by conventionalities of any kind, to wander in a hired Greek boat along the south coast of Asia Minor, in quest of those ancient sites and objects which are so dear to them. Their adventures, which were not a few, they here separate from all things archæological, and leave them to tell their own tale.

Many busy days were spent in the little Greek port of Syra in preparing for the piratical cruise. The F. S. A.'s inspected many craft, and at last entered into a 'symphony' with the skipper of a two-masted Greek schooner, possessing a capacious hold for their workmen and the trophies to be found, a fore-castle cabin into which in some mysterious manner four sailors packed themselves, namely, Captain Nicholas, burly and stout; Andreas, first mate, bulky; Gregory, second mate, of ordinary dimensions; and Stavros or Cross, a loutish boy, the slave of everybody, very little higher in the social scale than the ship's dog, Yuruk.

Eleven workmen were engaged with spades and pickaxes, and Matthew, the cook and body servant, was established as general overseer of the expedition. When it appeared that a sufficiency of tins of meat, sacks of biscuits, gruyère cheese, barrels of wine, and ammunition for the benefit of the lawless tribes in the proposed hunting ground, had been put on board, Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. set sail in the good ship 'Evangelistria,' which being interpreted means 'Annunciation;' and, both names appearing to

them too long, they generally spoke of the craft as the 'Blue Ship,' from the gaudy colour with which her sides were painted.

It was very sad for everybody concerned that the 'Blue Ship' put out into a boisterous sea before the process of unpacking had been performed. Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. struggled hopelessly with a table and two chairs, refractory bed-clothes and a hammock, and grew to hate the many luxuries they had provided for their comfort when they danced around them like evil spirits that could not be laid. As for the workmen, nothing could exceed the excellence of the spirits in which they came on board—'the boys' they used to call themselves—and peals of laughter came up from the hold as they selected their respective nests in the ballast in which to sleep. But their ribaldry was of short duration; very soon they were all prostrate on their hard beds, and a night of horror ensued such as made the heart of the boldest pirate quake. When morning dawned the wind was even fresher, and around the 'Blue Ship' white foaming billows danced and raged, and Andreas, the mate, a sullen fellow, who seldom spoke except to utter evil prognostications concerning the weather, informed Mr. F. S. A. as he crawled on deck, that though the bold headland of Cape Krio, the first point of Asia Minor at which he intended to touch, was straight ahead, it would be impossible to reach it that day, and that a haven of safety must be sought. This was a sorry haven indeed, behind a headland, which offered protection only from the wind; and for twenty-four hours the 'Blue Ship' lay at anchor there dancing like a kitten, to the infinite annoyance of those within. During all this sad period, not one of 'the boys' was more prostrate than the cook, so that Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. were greatly embarrassed for food suitable to the nature of their appetites at that juncture; and if an immediate return to the luxuries of home, and a life of honesty, had then been feasible, it is highly probable that their piratical cruise would have been brought to an abrupt termination.

All past inconveniences were speedily forgotten when the 'Blue Ship' rode peacefully at anchor in the tight little harbour where once the galleys of ancient Cnidos lay; it is at the extreme end of one of those limb-like promontories which Asia Minor throws out into the *Ægean*. Cape Ram is its translated name—doubtless given it from the likeness of the headland to a ram's head, joined by a narrow neck to the mainland, on either side of which neck are snug little harbours around which are the imposing

ruins of Cnidos; and for those two peaceful days of work and enjoyment amid these ruins, the F.S.A.'s would have been willing to forgive even greater discomforts in the retrospect. But then down from a village in the mountains came angry Turks bidding the F.S.A.'s to desist from their labours. A black Æthiopian soldier with a gun threatened to shoot the next 'boy' who should put a spade in the ground; so finally, after a council of war, it was decided to send Matthew to treat as best he could with the Governor of the district, necessitating a three days' journey of no ordinary difficulty.

During this interval of enforced idleness Captain Nicholas was raised to the rank of cook, assisted by as many of 'the boys' as thought they knew anything about the subject, with the natural result that the broth was often spoilt. Each night the nets were cast into the sea, and in the morning such lovely hauls of fish came in of the brightest colours, reminding one of the fish from the enchanted pond in the 'Arabian Nights.' One fish especially merits comment—it is called 'scorpion' sometimes, because it has poison at the end of its fins, and sometimes 'the calf of the sea' because it is excellent to eat; and if Captain Nicholas was unsuccessful when cooking meat, he was quite in his element when making scorpion soup.

The F.S.A.'s had now ample time for the arrangement of their cabin. One bunk was turned into a cupboard for the reception of the loose luxuries, the other Mr. F.S.A. occupied himself, and it was the captain's on ordinary occasions. Mrs. F.S.A. spent as much of her nights as circumstances would allow in her hammock athwartships, and when the table and chairs were up, there was no room for standing. At the stern end of their cabin was the cupboard for the saints, the lamp before which the boy Cross lit every night; and every Friday with great reverence he incensed the cabins and the deck, and dusted St. Michael, St. Nicholas, the Annunciation, and other pictures and relics which were provided to protect the 'Blue Ship' from peril.

Every night when the 'Blue Ship' was in a quiet harbour, one of the 'boys'—George, by name—was called upon by his fellows for some of those weird stories savouring of Æsop in which the Greeks of to-day rejoice. Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. lay awake enraptured as these stories penetrated into their cabin through the narrow partition: one told of a king who took in his own milk at his palace door, and sent his daughter to Paris to learn 'civilisa-

tion'; another told of a dragon which devastated a neighbourhood, and fell a prey to the powers of a modern St. George; others told of caïques freighted with gold, and of mysterious witchcraft, which caused royal childless ladies to be the happy mothers of children. And the F.S.A.'s heard to their contentment that the worst people in these stories were always Russians; the Greeks of a truth have no love for their co-religionists and would-be masters. To pass their time the 'boys' would dance on shore to the tune of a bagpipe, the playing of which was peremptorily forbidden on board. They were a capital set of fellows, willing workers, and excessively good-tempered, causing Mr. F.S.A. no trouble whatsoever during the whole of his fifty days' cruise. Would that he could have said as much for Captain Nicholas and the crew! On returning from a walk on one of these idle days the F.S.A.'s were made aware that their cabin had been the object of close scrutiny, by the sudden influx of animalculæ which it required all their resources in Keating to subdue. This fact, and the presence in the harbour of two smuggling craft, prevented them from wandering far; for though the smugglers came and paid them a visit and seemed to look upon the pirates as belonging to the same profession, nevertheless the F.S.A.'s never liked to put too much confidence in them.

The third evening after Matthew's departure, instead of bringing him, brought to those on the 'Blue Ship' blank dismay in the shape of a hurried note, in which he informed them that he had been unsuccessful with the Governor, and that he had been taken prisoner in the neighbouring village, and would not be released until a sum of money, which Mr. F.S.A. did not feel the least inclined to pay, had been sent. No one slept that night, and many plans of bravery were discussed. It seemed universally the opinion that early in the morning Mr. F.S.A. should march up to the village, which was about two hours distant, at the head of his faithful army, and demand the release of the prisoner, pistol in hand. His qualities as a general having hitherto been untested, it was the greatest relief to him, and doubtless to all concerned, when, early in the morning, Matthew appeared, breathless and excited, telling to eager ears how he had been placed in a room with a strong guard, black and white, how there had been a wedding on the previous evening, and how the guards had freely partaken of the festivities, and how he (Matthew) had, in the dead of night, escaped from a window, sent a Turk to

perdition who opposed his flight; and for the rest of the voyage, whenever the twelve 'boys' were dull, they would call for the story of 'Matthew the Prisoner,' which improved rapidly in the telling, and, doubtless, has been retailed in magnificent proportions to the twelve families at home.

Needless to say, the sails were rapidly unfurled, and the 'Blue Ship' triumphantly put forth to sea, in quest of another hunting-ground. No plan of action having suggested itself during the day, when the anchor was cast at night in a little bay, Captain Nicholas gave it as his advice that the ship should put into a certain harbour on the island of Syme, where there is a monastery well known to sailors, and that her future course should be decided by the counsel that the Superior would willingly give. Never did monastery appear more lovely and peaceful by the edge of its deep land-locked bay than did that of the Archangel Michael to the wanderers in the 'Blue Ship.' It was built for seafarers such as they, by pious hands, just after the fall of Constantinople, and is celebrated amongst the mariners of the Levant. Around the 'Blue Ship,' as she heaved to, swarmed countless geese—holy geese they are, the private property of the Archangel, and they gain their livelihood by picking up the offal cast from the boats which shelter here. None durst do them harm, for does not the legend relate how the first goose came here from Cyprus with an important letter under its wing for the Superior, and also how once a wicked sailor killed and ate one of these holy geese, and the angry Archangel refused to let his boat depart; though the wind was favourable, his boat would not move until he had confessed his crime and paid a heavy fine. No one, so alleges the popular belief, who has stolen anything here can get away. 'So, pirates,' said Captain Nicholas gaily to his men as they got into the ship's boat, 'beware!'

The monastic bell, a very large one, the gift of a sailor saved from shipwreck, rang out a welcome to the strangers as their boat neared the shore; the Superior received them warmly and promised every assistance in his power, and that evening they and all the 'boys,' except two naughty ones who ran off to the town of Syme without leave, attended service in the monastic church, and listened to the monks chanting amid sacred frescoes of the blessed and the damned, fine old pictures, wood-carving, and inlaid work. It was a peculiarly solemn function that day, being the eve of the dead, and many were the baskets of boiled

wheat offered, after the custom of the Eastern Church, at this festival, before the Archangel's shrine; and in the gloaming, at the convent door, the pirates ate with the assembled worshippers this holy food, and drank glasses of mastic to the success of their venture.

Very early next morning, stout Andreas came down into the F.S.A.'s cabin to fetch the sacred pictures, for the 'Blue Ship' and all therein were to be blessed by priests from the monastery. A clean towel was spread on the companion, and on it were placed a bowl of water, the sacred pictures, and a lantern; then, punctually at 7 A.M., two priests arrived in a boat, with their red bundle containing stoles, books, and a large silver diptych representing the Holy Virgin and the Lord Michael the Archangel, and various relics of many saints, who were prayed to grant their blessings to the 'Blue Ship,' that storms might not injure her, that the souls and bodies of all on board might be blessed, and that harmony might reign throughout the voyage. Captain Nicholas first received the blessing, accompanied by a whisk of holy water with the sprig of basil and a wave from the censer; then the sailors and the 'boys,' and lastly Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A., who, being heterodox, had modestly retired to a distant corner. Holy water was sprinkled over the deck and down into the cabins with the afore-said sprig, the pictures were kissed by the orthodox, and then this lovely and impressive service, as the brilliant light of the morning sun glimmered on the waves, was brought to a conclusion by Captain Nicholas, who divided what was left of the holy water between the two water casks, and then brought up a large black bottle of rum with which to regale the holy men.

During the morning, the pirates wandered amid the precincts of the convent, and visited the numerous cells, which are only filled when pilgrims visit the shrine on the Archangel's Day; and this is the reason why there is so large a dining-room, with wooden tables and benches to seat five hundred, a raised dais for the rich, and huge cauldrons in which to cook the food. 'Enough for the meal of forty dragons,' as a fable-loving 'boy' put it.

The Superior, Makarios, who was busily engaged all the morning in attending to the simmering of a savoury pot, insisted on the F.S.A.'s dining with him. And what a meal it was! A huge bowl of rice soup was followed by an exquisitely cooked lamb, stuffed with rice and herbs, which Makarios pulled to pieces with his fingers and distributed to the assembled guests; and into Mr.

F.S.A.'s luckless mouth he would occasionally insert with finger and thumb such bits as he considered particularly tit. Scarcely had this course disappeared, than up came a roast leg of lamb, which received similar treatment; then curds, then honey, then cream; and, like Captain Dalgetty, the guests ate gluttonously, not knowing when they might come across so good a meal. Makarios, on parting, gave them his blessing, his best map, and his man John to act as guide; and when the two truant boys had returned and been well scolded, towards evening the 'Blue Ship' again set sail, and great contentment reigned on board—the joint product of the blessing and the meal. Yet how transient are the effects of even an Archangel's blessing was proved by the fact that the first of a series of brawls took place that very evening between Mr. F.S.A. and Captain Nicholas on the subject of ship-lights, which, for economical reasons, Greek sailors object to carry.

Rounding Cape Fox—not christened, like Cape Ram, from its likeness to the head of the animal in question, but from its resemblance to the tail—the 'Blue Ship' put into a bleak bay, the shores of which are tenanted by wild Greek shepherds, whose reception was kindly, and all manner of dairy produce from their farms was taken on board. Amid the ruins of the ancient Loryma, shepherdesses in quaint red and blue costumes were tending their flocks; their homes were tiny hovels by the shore, scarce fit for pigsties, with enclosures around them for the goats and sheep. Night was rendered hideous by the laughing of jackals and the fierce barkings of the sheepdogs at the wolves, which cause sad havoc among the flocks; and here Sunday was passed in rest and peace. The twelve 'boys' employed their holiday chiefly in dancing on the shore, and in making charcoal out of roots for future consumption on the voyage, whilst Captain Nicholas was busy all day in fishing for *pinnas*, the contents of their red fan-shaped shells making a most excellent scallop.

After sundry investigations had been made in this wild locality, and after the F.S.A.'s had added the name of a town of the ancient world to the map of Asia Minor, which they found about two hours distant from their harbour, the 'Blue Ship' again bore them eastward, thankful to have met with no further interruption in their work. She had a splendid wind for her voyage that day, blowing straight from the mountains on to her stern, which in the evening freshened into a squall and carried her at steamer pace towards her destination, until, with the sun, down

went the wind, and she was left to rock amid the angry billows all night, at the very entrance to the haven in which she would be.

Nothing more lovely can be imagined than the Gulf of Makri, the ancient Telmessos, which the 'Blue Ship' was slowly entering when the F. S. A.'s rose next day; its mouth is studded with well-wooded islands, and the steep shores around are black with fir-trees and bristling with steep rocks; behind tower the snow-capped peaks of the Taurus range. She cast anchor amongst these islets at the mouth of the gulf, some twenty miles from the town of Makri, and, in point of fact, the F. S. A.'s were in as full possession of all around them as if they had descended on some undiscovered island of the Pacific. A few Greeks, very poor and very benighted, live on the island, but, in reality, the Greek element is here almost left behind, the inhabitants of these wild coasts being for the most part nomad wood-cutters, known as Yuruks by the Turks, descendants of the wandering Turcomans. The Greek women on the islet were greatly alarmed at the advent of strangers, and ran from them as if they had been uncanny, and trembled at the sight of the photographic camera as if it had been some new-fangled implement of war. However, one of the male inhabitants, the keeper of a tiny coffee house, turned out a very valuable ally, and conducted the wanderers to many sites of ruins on the mainland opposite.

No F. S. A. could wish for a more delightful spot than the one the Greek led them to next day; it was hidden in a basin surrounded by hills, on a promontory to the north of the gulf. Here were the virgin ruins of an unknown town, which turned out from inscriptions to have been called Lydæ in ancient days, but which as yet had escaped the ken of modern explorers, and a week passed blissfully away in investigating this spot. Nomad Yuruks had their dwellings amongst these ruins, and the study of these formed no small portion of the enjoyment of the sojourn here.

Every morning at six, the large boat left the 'Blue Ship,' bearing the F. S. A.'s and their twelve 'boys' to the shore, where Hassan, the Yuruk, was waiting with a mule for the conveyance of Mrs. F. S. A. to the ruins. It was a curious procession to witness, as the pirates toiled up the fir forest towards the plateau where the ruins lay, the twelve 'boys' armed with guns, spades, and picks, the F. S. A.'s with their revolvers ready charged, and the camera at hand to seize upon any view that struck them. As they

approached the Yuruk encampment, they each armed themselves with stones to drive off the savage dogs which guard the huts; terrible customers they are, the heroes of countless battles with the wolves. The Greek native guide was sent on to tell the tribe that those who came were men of peace, that their object was not rapine amongst the living, but amongst the dead; and, consequently, the reception, though somewhat distant and timorous, was far from hostile.

The huts of these nomads, as they peeped up amongst the brushwood, and the ruins of Lydæ, were exceedingly picturesque; they were constructed of branches, covered either with skins or with a rough sort of felt, woven by the women with camel's hair in looms fixed in a hole in the ground near each hut. Most of the huts were of skin here, for the tribe is especially nomadic, and carries with it very few women and very few looms.

Hassan had his tent close to some gigantic mausolea of ancient days, which occupied the attention of the F. S. A.'s during most of their stay at Lydæ, and at midday, whilst the twelve 'boys' rested, they generally retired for a chat to his tent, where they made close examination of his nomadic furniture, consisting chiefly of a rug for sleeping on, a pot for boiling in, and a curious contrivance for roasting coffee. Hassan was communicative, too, on the subject of his tribe: it would appear that each branch of it is termed *yaiïla*, which branch has the flocks in common, and wanders from place to place under the direction of a chief, called *Yuruk aghasi*; the authority of the head of the tribe, the White Beard (*ak-sakat*), who lives up in the mountains, is the only one they recognise. The Turks, it would appear, leave these nomads entirely to their own devices, demanding no taxes. And splendid fellows they are—just what is required to make the decaying empire a new backbone if they were properly organised and under a strong hand. Some see in these men the remnants of the Seljukians, whose ancestors ruled in these parts before the conquest of the Ottomans; at any rate, they are as different as possible in physique from the wretched Ottomans of Stamboul, and their language, too, is pure and terse.

At present, the sole occupation of these fine fellows is to ruin Asia Minor by cutting down the forests to sell wood and make charcoal. Sometimes, too, they will simply set fire to whole districts for the sole object of having the young grass for their flocks in the ensuing year. It would seem that just now the branch of

the tribe amongst whom the F.S.A.'s found themselves has its eye on the magnificent forests which cover the hills around Lydæ.

Each tribe possesses a goodly number of camels, long strings of which are met on every mountain path, groaning under the weight of newly-hewn timber—veteran camels of evil countenance, and tiny foal camels which ran by their mothers' side, and they are led by Yuruks with closely-shaven heads, having but one single lock left, which projects oddly from beneath their white skull-caps, and the meaning of which is that Mahomed should have it to pull them up to heaven by. Not that they adhere very strictly to the religious observances of the orthodox Mussulmans; they have no mosques at which to pray, they don't appear to mind their wives being seen; in fact, Mr. F.S.A. became very friendly with one Yuruk woman, whom he cured of a bad pain by a magic dose of brandy. She invited him into her tent, made coffee for him, and rolled him a cigarette, with face uncovered and no visible bashfulness.

Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. soon learnt a great deal about the history of Lydæ, and a neighbouring town which they re-christened Lissa, from the inscriptions they found amongst its ruins; and they felt like archæological generals, planting the standard of victory on one fortress after another. Lissa was, perhaps, even more lovely than Lydæ, being an ancient acropolis built on an escarped rock, rising straight out of the densest of forests, and dominating a lake. Nearly a fortnight slipped away deliciously in this enchanting region, and for the rest of their lives Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. will speak of Lydæ and Lissa in terms of rapture exceeding any previous experience. This fortnight was of the greatest importance also to the well-being of the twelve 'boys,' who, landlubbers as they were, began to weary of the sea, and the close confinement in the hold ('the lower world' and 'Hades,' as they jocosely termed it) was not conducive to health. On the whole, considering the difficulties to be contended with, there was wonderfully little sickness on board the 'Blue Ship.' One day, at Lissa, Nicholas drank water when heated, and got a shocking pain which made him writhe in agonies on the ground for the space of one hour, crying perpetually 'Holy Virgin, let it pass!' Basili, who professed to know somewhat of doctoring, borrowed a tumbler from the F.S.A.'s luncheon-basket, and cupped the sufferer by burning in it a cigarette paper and applying it to the part affected, with so satisfactory a result that, after a good rest, Nicholas was

able to walk the five miles home. Then, again, Guida's toothache was very bad, and Basili attacked it with the milk out of the stem of a spurge, and then got a certain shellfish, which he ground to powder, and made a stuffing; but the toothache continued relentlessly, and poor Guida was a source of anxiety during all the voyage.

Such delicious weather, and such delicious evenings on the 'Blue Ship' after the work of the day was over, gladdened the hearts of the wanderers. Every night Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. might be seen dining on deck in the twilight, and dining right well too, for lambs, milk, honey, and other rural delicacies abound around the Gulf of Makri, and there they would sit watching the stars come out, until the jackals and wild boars on shore warned them that night was come, and then they descended to their beds. Everyone was sorry to leave this enchanting gulf, but one day a personage came who professed to be the owner of the soil, and, knowing that he would not be long in informing the government at Makri of the presence of pirates in their midst, Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. deemed it time to give orders for their departure before worse should happen to them.

The voyage eastward was weary work, for the 'Blue Ship' had constantly to tack, and when the winds, contrary or otherwise, went down, she was left to roll in an angry sea, to the discontent of most of her passengers, who on the second morning hailed with delight a strong stern breeze, which bore them in a few hours to the port of the ancient Myra—the port where St. Paul tarried in his day, and where he found the 'ship of Alexandria.' That nomad Apostle would think Myra sorely changed for the worse if he could see it now; huge banks of sand have reared themselves like great natural earthworks along the shore; the river, which was navigable up to the town in his day, is now blocked up by a bar of sand at its mouth, but it still flows sluggishly past ruins of tombs and temples, and on its bank is still seen the great palace where lived the Roman prætor of Lycia in the days of the Apostle's visit, and which wants only a roof, windows, and wall-papers to make it habitable now.

Surely the rock-cut tombs of Myra ought to be considered as one of the sights of the world. A rocky mountain rising straight above the ruins of the theatre is honeycombed with these architectural gems, and the figures cut in relief in the living rock still stand guarding the portals of these long-since desecrated palaces of

the dead. The plain of Myra is cultivated by a handful of Greeks from the neighbouring flourishing island port of Castellorizo. They have built a small wooden village here, and in its midst is the remarkable church of St. Nicholas, once Bishop of Myra in the early Christian days, and a native of the place. This church the Russians excavated a few years ago, at the cost of 2,000*l*. It was buried, like all ruins in these parts, by some twenty feet of earth; and now, thanks to Russian gold, it is one of the most perfect specimens existing of early Christian art; the pulpit, the altar screen, the synod seats, the tessellated pavement, and the rich alabaster tombs are as they were in the early centuries of our era before destruction came upon them.

The Greek peasants about here are very picturesquely dressed, with scarlet jackets loosely covering a white chemise, a blue handkerchief bound round their necks, a fez adorned with gold spangles, a yellow girdle, and purple shoes embroidered with gold lace—quite the Greek peasants of Byron's days, who have not yet, like their compatriots in free Hellas, abandoned their old costumes for Western ugliness.

Around Myra a few days were spent in pleasant research, and then the 'Blue Ship,' having reached her farthest point eastwards, was prepared to return homewards; but before she left the harbour of Myra, a great alarm awaited those upon her, for a Turkish cruiser in search of smugglers came alongside and demanded admission. Captain Nicholas swore his loudest at them, all hands were summoned on deck, all the weapons were placed *en évidence*, with such satisfactory result that the cruiser quietly retreated, for she had only twelve men on board. Later on, the F.S.A.'s learnt that she had captured a smuggler with a cargo of tobacco on board, within sight of them. He is now doubtless languishing in a Turkish jail, if he has not money enough to bribe the officials to let him out.

Great preparations were made for the arrival of the 'Blue Ship' at the first civilised port she had visited since leaving Syra. One of the 'boys,' it appeared, understood hair-cutting, and borrowed Mrs. F.S.A.'s scissors for that purpose; beards were shaved, and shaggy locks reduced with wonderful rapidity, and Hades was strewn with hair. Castellorizo was the port, and it is a unique specimen of modern Greek enterprise, being a flourishing maritime town, built on a barren islet off the south coast of Asia Minor, far from any other Greek centre—a sort of halfway halting place

in the waves for vessels which trade between Alexandria and the Levantine ports; it has a splendid harbour, and is a town of sailors and sponge divers.

Captain Nicholas knew everybody. 'Where are you come from, my little captain?' asked they. 'From the sea,' he replied mysteriously, with a sly wink at Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A., to show that he did not intend to divulge their piratical secrets. He, his mates, and the twelve 'boys' went on shore for a day's jollification, into the depths of which the F.S.A.'s thought they had better not plunge, so, having visited the red castle of Italian date, and having admired the athletic men and pretty women of the island town, they returned to the 'Blue Ship' for a quiet afternoon.

Alone in the 'Blue Ship,' with none to see them save the ship's dog and the boy Cross, Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. planned and executed a terrible deed. It had for long been obvious to them that they would eventually have to wash their own clothes, but, owing to the busy nomadic life they had led, they had postponed the evil day. For the whole of that hot afternoon they knelt, one on either side of their india-rubber bath, soaping, kneading, wringing—a truly heavy wash; towels, sheets, wearing apparel were cast into the tub, cleansed by them as far as they were able, hung up in the rigging to dry, and then folded up neatly, so as to look as like clothes come home from the wash as possible; and the last scene in this drama was formed by Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. turning their bodies into mangles, for want of better, and behold them seated proudly each on a separate pile of clothes, quite exhausted with their labours, and feeling far more respect than they had ever done before for the washerwoman's trade.

Every one of the twelve 'boys' and the crew came on board that night with obvious proofs of their merry-making; some even had to be dragged up the side of the 'Blue Ship' and placed on their beds by their more sober fellows; all wrangled and quarrelled for a season, and that night no stories were told, but a chorus of heavy snoring told a tale of its own.

Betimes next morning the 'Blue Ship' was off, sailing with a gentle breeze towards another remote harbour, from which the sites of other Lycian ruins could be visited. The old town of Patara, famous in Roman days as 'the metropolis of Lycia,' and likewise visited by St. Paul, was the goal. Its splendid harbour being silted up, the 'Blue Ship' had to anchor some five miles distant, and the walk to the ruins followed for almost the whole way the

course of a ruined aqueduct. Numerous Yuruk encampments were again met with, in each of which violent canine greetings awaited the wanderers. But some of these encampments had more the appearance of settled life than those near Lydæ; for their grain they have actually constructed neat wooden storehouses, though they themselves continue to dwell in skin huts. But the wood-cutters are as wild and wandering as the rest; down by the shore many of them dwelt in huts with their camels and their flocks amid great stacks of wood which they have brought down from the mountains to sell to merchants, who carry on their dealings with these uncultured savages by means of wooden tallies, a set of which Mr. F.S.A. vainly endeavoured to acquire.

The harbour of Patara, into which presumably St. Paul's ship sailed, once stretched for fully a mile inland, and was lined by fine mausolea and palaces; now, by the interposition of a sand-bank, these ruins lie in a fetid, spongy marsh—temples, baths, and other buildings being hidden in rank vegetation and shaded by tall wavy palms. It is a spot of abject desolation, but of great and bewitching beauty; well-wooded slopes fringe the harbour; behind rise the deep-blue mountains of Lycia. It was the last halting-place of the wanderers on the Asiatic coast, and as the 'Blue Ship' sailed away, many a regretful glance was cast on the mighty mountains which had been such conspicuous objects in every view for the last few weeks.

The adventures of the 'Blue Ship' were by no means over when her course was directed straight homewards; much-enduring Ulysses himself could hardly have had a more trying time than Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. in their voyage from Patara to Syra. They were driven by stress of weather first into one bay and then into another; they were threatened with starvation and the complete failure of provisions, so that for several meals tinned lobster, hard biscuits, and arrowroot formed their only sustenance. On more than one occasion, Mr. F.S.A. had terrible rows with Captain Nicholas, whose friends at Castellorizo had replenished for him his rum bottle, and he loved to tarry unnecessarily in quiet harbours to discuss the contents thereof. He paced the deck in furious rage when Mr. F.S.A. mildly suggested that it would be as well to go on; and when Mr. F.S.A. told him plainly that if he did not proceed the future expense of the expedition, according to contract, would rest on his shoulders, perfectly livid with anger, he turned upon him, shrieking, 'I am a free Greek, not an

Indian slave!' whereupon Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. after a hearty laugh spent a busy afternoon in their cabin making butter out of some goats' milk they had got; nevertheless, despite their apparent indifference, they were relieved to hear an order issued for the weighing of the anchor, as soon as the spirit fumes had left Captain Nicholas and reason returned. From that day until their arrival at Syra, Captain Nicholas and Mr. F.S.A. never spoke; they paced the deck in sullen but expressive silence, and communicated with each other by the medium of Matthew, who considerably modified in the transition their harsher remarks.

The wild winds at length bore them to a desert island in the Ægean, called in modern times St. John's Island, from a tiny church thereon dedicated to that Saint; it is almost the most remote spot in all these seas—a lone, treeless, soilless islet, with stupendous rocks overhanging the sea, but interesting to the F.S.A.'s as bearing traces of the stone age, and hence, presumably, one of the stepping-stones by which the earlier mariners made their way to Europe. It is now leased to a farmer for 56*l.* a year, and contains nine souls—an old man and his wife and their descendants, who live in a state of wonderful simplicity in a small cabin of rough stone. The old granny was alone when they visited her, her husband being absent at his dairy on the hills, so they made a pilgrimage to visit him, and found a charming specimen of a bygone age busy making cheese. Of course, he groaned over his excessive rent—what farmer does not in all quarters of the globe? And he groaned, moreover, about a recent visit some thieves had paid him, making off with his cauldrons, his milk-troughs, and the fattest of his lambs. Occasionally a priest comes to perform service at the little church; now and again boats call for cheese and dairy produce—these are their only points of union with the outer world. Mr. F.S.A. admired with a view to purchase some nice-looking loaves of bread, but the honest old fellow told him how a boat from Rhodes had brought some flour to exchange for cheese, with which he had made the loaves in question, only to find them uneatable, for the flour had been kept in petroleum casks! It is to be feared that these good folk often get taken in, and that Matthew's injunction to the 'boys' to pay honestly for the cheese they bought would not be closely attended to.

Next morning, just as the 'Blue Ship' was preparing to depart, the twelve 'boys' came on board with magnificent bunches of yellow

marigold, for that night Hades had been visited by an invasion of fleas, caught doubtless in the old woman's hovel, and constant were the muttered oaths which told that the 'boys' were suffering keenly from the onslaught of the unwelcome visitors. The bunches of marigold were to remedy this, and a practical illustration of the effects of 'fleabane' was brought before the notice of the F.S.A.'s.

Tossed about again by the winds for two more days, on the third the 'Blue Ship' was obliged to take refuge from a fearful gale in the island of Patmos, a spot which aroused all the legendary lore of the simple-minded shipboy Cross, and, delighted at having such willing listeners as the F.S.A.'s, he poured into their ears quaint stories concerning the author of the Revelation: how a rock in the harbour represented the petrified body of an adversary of the exiled divine; and how the shellfish which are caught thereon have a disgusting smell and are unfit for food. Cross, too, in a subdued and awe-struck voice, gave them his opinion concerning those mysterious mast-head lights, the fires of St. Elmo, which appear in storms. He had seen them off Andros, he said, and 'they are,' he added, 'a sort of soft bird with a light on their heads, which sit and eat the inside of the masts, so that they become hollow, and break with the next gust of wind; they are wild things which God sends to punish men.' The boy Cross was quite Homeric in his yarns, and in consequence gave keen delight to the F.S.A.'s.

Meanwhile, the commissariat department was causing great anxiety—the 'boys' had long since finished their stores, and were living on herbs they picked up on shore, shellfish, and cheese. Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A., who always dreaded being reduced to similar rations, could do nothing but curb their appetites and whistle for a fair wind, which came at last, and bore the 'Blue Ship' bravely on her way to Syra. As they approached, mate Andreas, who, though active as a lizard and a capital sailor, was terribly glum and ugly, actually made a joke. 'Now,' said he, 'is the time to black our boots,' at which everyone on board laughed heartily, so very low had sunk their sense of humour.

On the fiftieth day after her departure, the 'Blue Ship' deposited the wanderers once more amongst the busy haunts of men, and the F.S.A.s' one regret in leaving her was having to bid adieu to the affectionate ship's dog, which had had fifty feast days in his life off their remains, and would probably have no more.

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYRZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE UNEXPECTED.

LATE in the evening Wilfrid received a visit from his father. Mr. Athel had dined with his sister, and subsequently accompanied his nieces to a concert. Beatrice should have sung, but had broken her engagement on the plea of ill-health.

'Been at home all the evening?' Mr. Athel began by asking.

'I got home late,' Wilfrid answered, rising from his chair.

His father had something to say which cost him hesitation. He walked about with his hands between the tails of his coat.

'Seen Beatrice lately?' he inquired at length.

'No; not since last Monday.'

'I'm afraid she isn't well. She didn't sing to-night. Didn't dine with us either.'

Wilfrid kept silence.

'Something wrong?' was his father's next question.

'Yes, there is.'

'I'm sorry to hear that.'

Wilfrid went to the fire-place and leaned his arm upon the mantelpiece. As he did not seem disposed to speak, his father continued—

'Nothing serious, I hope?'

'Yes; something serious.'

'You don't mean that? Anything you can talk about?'

'I'm afraid not. I shall go and see Beatrice as usual to-morrow. I may be at liberty to tell you after that, though probably not for a few days.'

Mr. Athel looked annoyed.

'I hope this is not of your doing,' he said. 'They tell me the girl is causing them a good deal of anxiety. For the last few days she has been sitting alone, scarcely touching food, and refusing to speak to anyone. If this goes on she will be ill.'

Wilfrid spoke hoarsely.

'I can't help it. I shall see her to-morrow.'

'All right,' observed his father, with the impatience which was his way of meeting disorders in this admirable universe. 'Your aunt asked me to tell you this; of course I can do no more.'

Wilfrid made no reply, and Mr. Athel left him.

It was an hour of terrible suffering that Wilfrid lived through before he left the study and went to lay his head on the pillow. He had not thought very much of Beatrice hitherto; the passion which had spurred him blindly on made him forgetful of everything but the end his heart desired. Now that the end was within reach, he could consider what it was that he had done. He was acting like a very madman. He could not hope that any soul would regard his frenzy even with compassion; on all sides he would meet with the sternest condemnation. Who would recognise his wife? This step which he was taking meant rupture with all his relatives, perchance with all his friends; for it would be universally declared that he had been guilty of utter baseness. His career was ruined. It might happen that he would have to leave England with Emily, abandoning for her sake everything else that he prized.

How would Beatrice bear the revelation? Mere suspense had made her ill; such a blow as this might kill her. Never before had he been consciously guilty of an act of cruelty or of wrong to any the least valued of those with whom he had dealt; to realise what his treachery meant to Beatrice was so terrible that he dared not fix his thought upon it. Her love for him was intense beyond anything he had imagined in woman; Emily had never seemed to him possessed with so vehement a passion. Indeed he had often doubted whether Emily's was a passionate nature; at times she was almost cold—appeared so, in his thought of her—and never had she given way to that self-forgetful ardour which was so common in Beatrice. Sweat broke out upon his forehead as he saw the tragic issues to which his life was tending. There was no retreat, save by a second act of apostasy so unspeakably shameful that the brand of it would drive him to self-destruction. He had made his choice, or had been driven upon it by the powers which ruled his destiny; it only remained to have the courage of his resolve and to defy consequences. At least it was in no less a cause than that of his life's one love. There was no stamp of

turpitude on the end for which he would sacrifice so much and occasion so much misery.

He passed the time in his own rooms till the afternoon of the following day; then, at the customary hour, he set forth to visit Beatrice. Would she see him? In his heart he hoped that she would refuse; yet, he dreaded lest he should be told that she was too unwell. It was a new thing in Wilfrid's experience to approach any door with shame and dread; between his ringing the bell and the servant's answer he learnt well what those words mean.

He was admitted as usual, the servant making no remark. As usual, he was led to Beatrice's room.

She was sitting in the chair she always occupied, and was dressed with the accustomed perfection. But her face was an index to the sufferings she had endured this past week. As soon as the door had closed, she stood to receive him, but not with extended hand. Her eyes were fixed upon him steadily, and Wilfrid, with difficulty meeting them, experienced a shock of new fear, a kind of fear he could not account for. Outwardly she was quite calm; it was something in her look, an indefinable suggestion of secret anguish, that impressed him so. He did not try to take her hand, but, having laid down his hat, came near to her and spoke as quietly as he could.

'May I speak to you of what passed between us last Monday?'

'How can we avoid speaking of it?' she replied, in a low voice, her eyes still searching him.

'I ought to have come to see you before this,' Wilfrid continued, taking the seat to which she pointed, whilst she also sat down. 'I could not.'

'I have been expecting you,' Beatrice said, in an emotionless way.

The nervous tension with which he had come into her presence had yielded to a fit of trembling. Coldness ran along his veins; his tongue refused its office; his eyes sank before her gaze.

'I felt sure you would come to-day,' Beatrice continued, with the same absence of pronounced feeling. 'If not, I must have gone to your house. What do you wish to say to me?'

'That which I find it very difficult to say. I feel that after what happened on Monday we cannot be quite the same to each other. I fear I said some things that were not wholly true.'

Beatrice seemed to be holding her breath. Her face was marble. She sat unmoving.

'You mean,' she said at length, 'that those letters represented more than you were willing to confess?'

It was calmly asked. Evidently Wilfrid had no outbreak of resentment to fear. He would have preferred it to this dreadful self-command.

'More,' he answered, 'than I felt at the time. I spoke no word of conscious falsehood.'

'Has anything happened to prove to you what you then denied?'

He looked at her in doubt. Could she in any way have learnt what had come to pass? Whilst talking, he had made up his mind to disclose nothing definitely; he would explain his behaviour merely as arising from doubt of himself. It would make the rest easier for her to bear hereafter.

'I have read those letters again,' he answered.

'And you have learnt that you never loved me?'

He held his eyes down, unable to utter words. Beatrice also was silent for a long time. At length she said—

'I think you are keeping something from me?'

He raised his face.

'Has nothing else happened?' she asked, with measured tone, a little sad, nothing more.

The truth was forced from him, and its utterance gave him a relief which was in itself a source of new agitation.

'Yes, something else has happened.'

'I knew it.'

'How did you——?'

'I felt it. You have met her again.'

Again he was speechless. Beatrice asked—

'Does she live in London?'

'She does.'

'You have met her, and have—have wished that you were free?'

'Beatrice, I have done worse. I have acted as though I were free.'

She shook, as if a blow had fallen upon her. Then a smile came to her lips.

'You have asked her again to be your wife?'

'I have.'

‘And she has consented?’

‘Because I deceived her at the same time that I behaved dishonourably to you.’

She fixed upon him eyes which had a strange inward look, eyes veiled with reverie, vaguely troubled, unimpassioned. It was as though she calmly readjusted in her own mind the relations between him and herself. The misery of Wilfrid's situation was mitigated in a degree by mere wonder at her mode of receiving his admissions. This interview was no logical sequence upon the scene of a week ago; and the issue then had been, one would have thought, less provocative of demonstration than to-day's.

Directness once more armed her gaze, and again he was powerless to meet it. Still no resentment, no condemnation. She asked—

‘It is your intention to marry soon?’

He could not reply.

‘Will you let me see you once more before your marriage?’ she continued. ‘That is, if I find I wish it. I am not sure. I may or may not.’

It was rather a debate with herself than an address to him.

‘May I leave you now, Beatrice?’ he said, suddenly. ‘Every drop of blood in me is shame-heated. In telling you this, I have done something which I thought would be beyond my force.’

‘Yes,’ she murmured, ‘it will be better if we part now.’

She rose and watched him as he stepped to the table and took his hat. There was a moment's hesitation on either side, but Beatrice did not offer her hand. She stood superbly, as a queen might dismiss one from whom her thoughts were already wandering. He bowed, with inward self-mockery, and left her.

Some hours later, when already the summer evening had cloaked itself, Wilfrid found himself wandering by the river, not far from Hammersmith. The influence of a great water flowing from darkness into darkness was strong upon him; he was seeking for a hope in the transitoriness of all things earthly. Would not the hour come when this present anguish, this blood-poisoning shame, would have passed far away and have left no mark? Was it not thinking too grandiosely to attribute to the actions of such a one as himself a tragic gravity? Was there not supernal laughter at the sight of him, Wilfrid Athel, an English gentleman, a member of the Lower House of the British Parliament

posing as the arbiter of destinies? What did it all come to? An imbroiglio on the threshold of matrimony; a temporary doubt which of two women was to enjoy the honour of styling herself Mrs. Athel. The day's long shame led to this completeness of self-contempt. As if Beatrice would greatly care! Why, in his very behaviour he had offered the cure for her heartburn; and her calmness showed how effective the remedy would be. The very wife whom he held securely had only been won by keeping silence; tell her the story of the last few days, and behold him altogether wifeless. He laughed scornfully. To this had he come from those dreams which guided him when he was a youth. A commonplace man, why should he not have commonplace experiences?

He had walked in this direction with the thought of passing beneath Emily's window before he returned home, yet, now that he was not more than half an hour's walk from her, he felt weary and looked aside for a street which should lead him to the region of vehicles. As he did so, he noticed a woman's form leaning over the riverside parapet at a short distance. A thought drew him nearer to her. Yes, it was Emily herself.

'You were coming to see me?' she asked.

Love in a woman's voice—what cynicism so perdurable that it will bear against that assailant? In the dusk, he put her gloved hand against his lips, and the touch made him once more noble.

'I had meant to, beautiful, but it seemed too late, and I was just on the point of turning back. You always appear to me when I most need you.'

'You wanted to speak to me, Wilfrid?'

'When do I not? My life seems so thin and poor; only your breath gives it colour. Emily, I shall ask so much of you. I have lost all faith in myself; you must restore it.'

They stood close to each other, hand in hand, looking down at the dark flow.

'If I had not met you, Wilfrid,' she said, or whispered, 'I think my end must have been there—there, below us. I have often come here at night. It is always a lonely place, and at high tide the water is deep.'

His hand closed upon hers with rescuing force.

'I am carrying a letter,' Emily continued, 'that I was going to post before I went in. I will give it you now, and I am glad of the opportunity; it seems safer. I have written what I feel I

could never say to you. Read it and destroy it, and never speak of what it contains.'

She gave him the letter, and then he walked with her homewards.

On the morrow, shortly after breakfast, he was sitting in his study, when a knock came at the door. He bade enter, and it was Beatrice. She came towards him, gave her hand mechanically, and said—

'Can you spare me a few minutes?'

He placed a chair for her. Her eyes had not closed since they last looked at him; he saw it, though the expression of her features was not weariness.

'There is one thing, Wilfrid, that I think I have a right to ask you. Will you tell me why she left you, years ago?'

Her tone was that of one continuing a conversation. There might have been no break between yesterday and to-day. We cannot always gather from the voice what struggle has preceded utterance.

Wilfrid turned away. On the table lay that letter of Emily's; he had read it many times, and was reading it when the knock disturbed him. With a sudden movement, he took up the sheet of paper, and held it to Beatrice.

'It is there—the reason. I myself have only known it a few hours. Read that. I have no right to show it you—and no right to refuse.'

Beatrice held the letter for a brief space without turning her eyes upon it. Wilfrid walked to a distance, and at length she read. Emily had recounted every circumstance of her father's death, and told the history of her own feelings, all with complete simplicity, almost coldly. Only an uncertainty in the handwriting here and there showed the suffering it had cost her to look once more into the very eyes of the past. Yet it was of another than herself that she wrote; she felt that even in her memory of woe.

They faced each other again. Beatrice's eyes were distended; their depths lightened.

'I am glad! I am glad you met her before it was too late!'

Her voice quivered upon a low, rich note. Such an utterance was the outcome of a nature strong to the last limit of self-conquest. Wilfrid heard and regarded her with a kind of fear; her intensity passed to him; he trembled.

'I have nothing to pardon,' she continued. 'You were hers long before my love had touched your heart. You have tried to love me; but this has come soon enough to save us both.'

And again—

'If I did not love you, I should act selfishly; but self is all gone from me. In this moment I could do greater things to help you to happiness. Tell me; have you yet spoken to—to the others?'

'To no one.'

'Then do not. It shall all come from me. No one shall cast upon you a shadow of blame. You have done me no wrong; you were hers, and you wronged her when you tried to love me. I will help you—at least I can be your friend. Listen; I shall see her. It shall be I who have brought you together again—that is how they shall all think of it. I shall see her, and as your friend, as the only one to whom you have yet spoken. Do you understand me, Wilfrid? Do you see that I make the future smooth for her and you? She must never know what *we* know. And the others—they shall do as I will; they shall not dare to speak one word against you. What right have they, if *I* am—am glad?'

He stood in amaze. It was impossible to doubt her sincerity; her face, the music of her voice, the gestures by which her eagerness expressed itself, all were too truthful. What divine nature had lain hidden in this woman! He gazed at her as on a being more than mortal.

'How can I accept this from you?' he asked hoarsely.

'Accept? How can you refuse? It is my right, it is my will! Would you refuse me this one poor chance of proving that my love was unselfish? I would have killed myself to win a tender look from you at the last moment, and you shall not go away thinking less of me than I deserve. You know already that I am not the idle, powerless woman you once thought me; you shall know that I can do yet more. If *she* is noble in your eyes, can *I* consent to be less so?'

Passion the most exalted possessed her. It infected Wilfrid. He felt that the common laws of intercourse between man and woman had here no application; the higher ground to which she summoned him knew no authority of the conventional. To hang his head was to proclaim his own littleness.

'You are not less noble, Beatrice,' his voice murmured.

'You have said it. So there is no longer a constraint between us. How simple it is to do for love's sake what those who do not know love think impossible. I will see her, then the last difficulty is removed. That letter has told me where she lives. If I go there to-day, I shall find her?'

'Not till the evening,' Wilfrid replied under his breath.

'When is your marriage?'

He looked at her without speaking.

'Very soon? Before the end of the session?'

'The day after to-morrow.'

She was white to the lips, but kept her eyes on him steadily.

'And you go away at once?'

'I had thought'—he began; then added, 'Yes, at once; it is better.'

'Yes, better. Your friend stays and makes all ready for your return. Perhaps I shall not see you after to-day, for that time. Then we are to each other what we used to be. You will bring her to hear me sing? I shall not give it up now.'

She smiled, moved a little away from him, then turned again and gave her hand for leave-taking.

'Wilfrid!'

'Beatrice?'

'She would not grudge it me. Kiss me—the last time—on my lips!'

He kissed her. When the light came again to his eyes, Beatrice had gone.

In the evening Emily sat expectant. Either Wilfrid would come or there would be a letter from him; yes, he would come; for, after reading what she had written, the desire to speak with her must be strong in him. She sat at her window and looked along the dull street.

She had spent the day as usual—that is to say, in the familiar school routine; but the heart she had brought to her work was far other than that which for long years had laboriously pulsed the flagging moments of her life. Her pupils were no longer featureless beings, the sole end of whose existence was to give trouble; girl-children and budding womanhood had circled about her; the lips which recited lessons made unconscious music; the eyes, dark or sunny, laughed with secret foresight of love to come. Kindly affection to one and all grew warm within her; what had been only languid preferences developed in an hour to

little less than attachments, and dislikes softened to pity. The girls who gave promise of beauty and tenderness she looked upon with the eyes of a sister; their lot it would be to know the ecstacy of whispered vows, to give and to receive that happiness which is not to be named lest the gods become envious. Voices singing together in the class practice which had ever been a weariness, stirred her to a passion of delight; it was the choral symphony of love's handmaidens. Did they see a change in her? Emily fancied that the elder girls looked at each other and smiled and exchanged words in an undertone—about her.

It was well to have told Wilfrid all her secrets, yet in the impatience of waiting she had tremors of misgiving; would he, perchance, think as she so long had thought, that to speak to anyone, however near, of that bygone woe and shame was a sin against the pieties of nature, least of all excusable when committed at the bidding of her own desires? He would never breathe to her a word which could reveal such a thought, but Wilfrid, with his susceptibility to the beautiful in character, his nature so intensely in sympathy with her own, might more or less consciously judge her to have fallen from fidelity to the high ideal. Could he have learnt the story of her life, she still persevering on her widowed way, would he not have deemed her nobler? Aid against this subtlety of conscience rose in the form of self-reproof administered by that joyous voice of nature which no longer timidly begged a hearing, but came as a mandate from an unveiled sovereign. With what right, pray, did she desire to show in Wilfrid's eyes as other than she was? That part in life alone becomes us which is the very expression of ourselves. What merit can there be in playing the votary of an ascetic conviction when the heart is bursting with its stifled cry for light and warmth, for human joy, for the golden fruit of the tree of life? She had been sincere in her renunciation; the way of worthiness was to cherish a sincerity as complete, now that her soul flamed to the bliss which fate once more offered her.

The hours passed slowly; how long the night would be if Wilfrid neither wrote to her nor came! But he had written; at eight o'clock the glad signal of the postman drew her to the door of her room where she stood trembling whilst someone went to the letter-box, and—oh, joy! ascended the stairs. It was her letter; because her hands were too unsteady to hold it for reading, she knelt by a chair, like a child with a new picture-book, and

spread the sheet open. And, having read it twice, she let her face fall upon her palms, to repeat to herself the words which danced fire-like before her darkened eyes. He wrote rather sadly, but she would not have had it otherwise, for the sadness was of love's innermost heart, which is the shrine of mortality.

As Emily knelt thus by the chair there came another knock at the house-door, the knock of a visitor. She did not hear it, nor yet the tap at her own door which followed. She was startled to consciousness by her landlady's voice.

'There's a lady wishes to see you, Miss Hood.'

'A lady?' Emily repeated in surprise. Then it occurred to her that it must be Mrs. Baxendale, who knew her address and was likely to be in London at this time of the year. 'Does she give any name?'

No name. Emily requested that the visitor should be introduced.

Not Mrs. Baxendale, but a face at first barely remembered, then growing with suggestiveness upon Emily's gaze until all was known save the name attached to it. A face which at present seemed to bear the pale signs of suffering, though it smiled; a beautiful visage of high meanings, impressive beneath its crown of dark hair. It smiled and still smiled; the eyes looked searchingly.

'You do not remember me, Miss Hood?'

'Indeed, I remember you—your face, your voice. But your name——? You are Mrs. Baxendale's niece.'

'Yes; Miss Redwing.'

'O, how could I forget!'

Emily became silent. The eyes that searched her so were surely kind, but it was the time of fears. Impossible that so strange a visit should be unconnected with her fate. And the voice thrilled upon her strung nerves ominously; the lips she watched were so eloquent of repressed feeling. Why should this lady come to her? Their acquaintance had been so very slight.

She murmured an invitation to be seated.

'For a moment,' returned Beatrice, 'you must wonder to see me. But I think you remember that I was a friend of the Athels. I am come with Mr. Athel's leave—Mr. Wilfrid.'

Emily was agitated and could not smooth her features.

'O, don't think I bring you bad news,' pursued the other

quickly, leaning a little forward and again raising her eyes. She had dropped them on the mention of Wilfrid's name. 'I have come, in fact, to put Mr. Athel at ease in his mind.' She laughed nervously. 'He and I have been close friends for a very long time, indeed since we were all but children, and I—he—you won't misunderstand? He has told me—me alone as yet—of what has happened, of the great good fortune that has come to him so unexpectedly. If you knew the terms of our friendship you would understand how natural it was for him to take me into his confidence, Miss Hood. And I begged him to let me visit you, because'—again she laughed in the same nervous way—'because he was in a foolish anxiety lest you might have vanished. I told him it was best that he should have the evidence of a very practical person's senses that you were really here and that he hadn't only dreamt it. And as we did know each other, you see—— You will construe my behaviour kindly, will you not?'

'Surely I will, Miss Redwing,' Emily responded warmly. 'How else could I meet your own great kindness?'

'I feared so many things; even at the door I almost turned away. There seemed so little excuse for my visit. It was like intruding upon you. But Mr. Athel assured me that I should not be unwelcome.'

Emily, overcome by the sense of relief after her apprehensions, gave free utterance to the warm words in which her joy voiced itself. She forgot all that was strange in Beatrice's manner or attributed it merely to timidity. Sympathy just now was like sunshine to her; she could not inquire whence or why it came, but was content to let it bathe her in its divine solace.

'If you knew how it has flattered me!' Beatrice continued, with a semblance of light-hearted goodness which her hearer had no thought of criticising. 'It is the final proof of Mr. Athel's good opinion. You know his poor opinion of conventional people and conventional behaviour. He is determined that no one shall be told till—till after Wednesday—making me the sole exception, you see. But seriously I am glad he did so, and that I have been able to meet you again just at this time. Now I can assure him that you are indeed a living being, and that there is no danger whatever of your disappearing.'

Emily did not join the musical laugh, but her heart was full, and she just laid her hand on that of Beatrice.

'It was only for a moment,' the latter said, rising as she felt

the touch. 'This is no hour for paying visits, and, indeed, I have to hurry back again. I should like to—only to say that you have my very kindest wishes. You forgive my coming; you forgive my hastening away so?'

'I feel I ought to thank you more,' broke from Emily's lips. 'To me, believe, it is all very like a dream. O, it was kind of you to come. You can't think,' she added, with only apparent irrelevance, 'how often I have recalled your beautiful singing; I have always thought of you with gratitude for that deep pleasure you gave me.'

'O, you shall hear me sing again,' laughed Beatrice. 'Ask Mr. Athel to tell you something about that. Indeed, it must be good-bye.'

They took each other's hands, but for Emily it was not sufficient; she stepped nearer, offering her lips.

Beatrice kissed her.

CHAPTER XXV.

A FAMILY CONCLAVE.

AT eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning Beatrice called at the Athels' house. Receiving the expected information that Wilfrid was not at home, she requested that Mr. Athel senior might not be disturbed and went to Wilfrid's study.

Alone in the room, she took from her hand-bag a little packet addressed to Wilfrid on which she had written the word 'private,' and laid it on the writing-table.

She appeared to have given special attention to her toilet this morning; her attire was that of a lady of fashion, rich, elaborate, devised with consummate art, its luxury draping well the superb form wherein blended with such strange ardour the flames of heroism and voluptuousness. Her moving made the air delicate with faint perfume; her attitude as she laid down the packet and kept her hand upon it for a moment was self-conscious, but nobly so; if an actress, she was cast by nature for the great parts and threw her soul into the playing of them.

She lingered by the table, touching objects with the tips of her gloved fingers, as if lovingly and sadly; at length she seated herself in Wilfrid's chair and gazed about the room with languid, wistful eyes. Her bosom heaved; once or twice a sigh trembled

to all but a sob. She lost herself in reverie. Then the clock near her chimed silverly half-past eleven. Beatrice drew a deep breath, rose slowly, and slowly went from the room.

A cab took her to Mrs. Baxendale's. That lady was at home and alone, reading in fact; she closed her book as Beatrice entered, and a placid smile accompanied her observation of her niece's magnificence.

'I was coming to make inquiries,' she said. 'Mrs. Birks gave me a disturbing account of you yesterday. Has your headache gone?'

'Over, all over,' Beatrice replied, quietly. 'They make too much of it.'

'I think it is you who make too little of it. You are wretchedly pale.'

'Am I? That will soon go. I think I must leave town before long. Advise me; where shall I go?'

'But you don't think of going before——?'

'Yes, quite soon.'

'You are mysterious,' remarked Mrs. Baxendale, raising her eyebrows a little as she smiled.

'Well, aunt, I will be so no longer. I want to cross-examine you, if you will let me. Do you promise to answer?'

'To the best of my poor ability.'

'Then the first question shall be this,—when did you last hear of Emily Hood?'

'Of Emily Hood?'

Mrs. Baxendale had the habit of controlling the display of her emotions, it was part of her originality. But it was evident that the question occasioned her extreme surprise, and not a little trouble.

'Yes, will you tell me?' said Beatrice, in a tone of calm interest.

'It's a strange question. Still, if you really desire to know, I heard from her about six months ago.'

'She was in London then?'

Mrs. Baxendale had quite ceased to smile. When any puzzling matter occupied her thought she always frowned very low; at present her frown indicated anxiety.

'What reason have you to think she was in London, Beatrice?'

'Only her being here now.'

Beatrice said it with a show of pleasant artfulness, holding

her head aside a little and smiling into her aunt's eyes. Mrs. Baxendale relaxed her frown and looked away.

'Have you seen her lately?' Beatrice continued.

'I have not seen her for years.'

'Ah! But you have corresponded with her?'

'At very long intervals.'

Before Beatrice spoke again, her aunt resumed.

'Don't lay traps for me, my dear. Suppose you explain at once your interest in Emily Hood's whereabouts.'

'Yes, I wish to do so. I have come to you to talk about it, aunt, because I know you take things quietly, and just now I want a little help of the kind you can give. You have guessed, of course, what I am going to tell you,—part of it at least. Wilfrid and she have met.'

'They have met,' repeated the other, musingly, her face still rather anxious. 'In what way?'

'By chance, pure chance.'

'By chance? It was not, I suppose, by chance that you heard of the meeting?'

'No. Wilfrid told me of it. He told me on Sunday——'

Her voice was a little uncertain.

'Give me your hand, dear,' said Mrs. Baxendale. 'There, now tell me the rest.'

Beatrice half sobbed.

'Yes, I can now more easily,' she continued, with hurried utterance. 'Your hand is just what I wanted; it is help, dear help. But you mustn't think I am weak; I could have stood alone. Yes, he told me on Sunday. And that of course was the end.'

'At his desire?'

'His and mine. He was honest with me. It was better than such discoveries when it would have been too late.'

'And he is going to marry her?'

'They were married an hour ago.'

Mrs. Baxendale looked with grave inquiry into Beatrice's face. Incredulity was checked by what she saw there. She averted her eyes again, and both were silent for awhile.

'So it is all well over, you see,' Beatrice said at length, trying at light-heartedness.

'Over, it seems. As to the well or ill, I can't say.'

'Surely well,' rejoined Beatrice. 'He loves her, and he would

never have loved me. We can't help it. She has suffered dreadful things; you see it in her face.'

'Her face?'

'I went to see her on Monday evening,' Beatrice explained, with simplicity, though her lips quivered. 'I asked leave of Wilfrid to do so; he had told me all her story, as he had just heard it from herself, and I—indeed I was curious to see her again. Then there was another reason. If I saw her and brought her to believe that Wilfrid and I were merely intimate friends, as we used to be—how much easier it would make everything. You understand me, aunt?'

Mrs. Baxendale was again looking at her with grave, searching eyes, eyes which began to glimmer a little when the light caught them. Beatrice's hand she held pressed more and more closely in both her own. She made no reply to the last question, and the speaker went on with a voice which lost its clearness, and seemed to come between parched lips.

'You see how easy that makes everything? I want your help, of course; I told Wilfrid that this was how I should act. It is very simple; let us say that I prefer to be thought an unselfish woman; anyone can be jealous and malicious. You are to think that I care as little as it would seem; I don't yet know how I am to live, but of course I shall, it will come in time. It was better they should be married in this way. Then he must come back after the holidays, and everything be smooth for him. That will be our work, yours and mine, dear aunt. You understand me? You will talk to Mrs. Birks; it will be better from you; and then Mr. Athel shall be told. Yes, it is hard for me, but perhaps not quite in the way you think. I don't hate her, indeed I don't. If you knew that story, which you never can! No, I don't hate her. I kissed her, aunt, with my lips—indeed. She couldn't find me out; I acted too well for that. But I couldn't have done it if I had hated her. She is so altered from what she was. You know that I liked her years ago. She interested me in a strange, strange way; it seems to me now that I foresaw how her fate would be connected with mine. I knew that Wilfrid loved her before anyone else had dreamt of such a thing. Now promise your help.'

'Have they gone away?' her aunt asked.

'I don't know. It is likely.'

Her face went white to the lips; for a moment she quivered.

'Beatrice, stay with me,' said Mrs. Baxendale. 'Stay with me here for a day or two.'

'Willingly. I wished it. Mrs. Birks is all kindness, but I find it hard to talk, and she won't let me be by myself. Don't think I am ill—no, indeed no! It's only rest that I want. It seems a long time since Sunday. But you haven't yet promised me, aunt. It will be much harder if I have to do everything myself. I promised him that everything should be made smooth. I want to show him that my—that my love was worth having. It's more than all women would do, isn't it, aunt? Of course it isn't only that; there's the pleasure of doing something for him. And he cannot help being grateful to me as long as he lives. Suppose I had gone and told her! She would never have married him. She was never beautiful, you know, and now her face is dreadfully worn, but I think I understand why he loves her. Of course you cannot know her as well as I do. And you will help me, aunt?'

'Are you perfectly sure that they have been married this morning?' Mrs. Baxendale asked, with quiet earnestness.

'Sure, quite sure.'

'In any other case I don't know whether I should have done as you wish.'

'You would have tried to prevent it? O no, you are too wise. After all this time, and he loves her as much as ever. Don't you see how foolish it would be to fret about it? It is fate, that's all. You know we all have our fate. Do you know what I used to think mine would be? I feared madness; my poor father—— But I shall not fear that now; I have gone through too much; my mind has borne it. But I must have rest, and I can only rest if I know that you are helping me. You promise?'

'I will do my best, dear.'

'And your best is best indeed, aunt. You will go to Mrs. Birks and tell her where I am? The sooner you speak to her the better. I will lie down. If you knew how worn-out I feel!'

She rose, but stood with difficulty. Mrs. Baxendale put her arm about her and kissed her cheek. Then she led her to another room.

Tension in Beatrice was nearing the point of fever. She had begun the conversation with every appearance of calmness; now she was only to be satisfied by immediate action towards the end she had in view, every successive minute of delay was an

added torment. She pressed her aunt to go to Mrs. Birks forthwith; that alone could soothe her. Mrs. Baxendale yielded and set out.

But it was not to Mrs. Birks that she paid her first visit. Though it was clear that Beatrice firmly believed all she said, Mrs. Baxendale could not accept this as positive assurance; before taking upon herself to announce such a piece of news she felt the need of some further testimony. She had a difficulty in reconciling precipitate action of this kind with Wilfrid's character as it had of late years developed itself; political, even social, ambition had become so pronounced in him that it was difficult to imagine him turning with such sudden vehemence from the path in which every consideration of interest would tend to hold him. The best of women worship success, and though Mrs. Baxendale well knew that Wilfrid's aims had suffered a degradation she could not, even apart from her feeling for Beatrice, welcome his return to the high allegiance of former days, when it would surely check or altogether terminate a brilliant career. The situation had too fantastic a look. Could it be that Beatrice was suffering from some delusion? Had a chance discovery of Emily Hood's proximity, together perhaps with some ambiguous behaviour on Wilfrid's part, affected her mind? It was an extreme supposition, but on the whole as easy of acceptance as the story Beatrice had poured forth.

In pursuit of evidence Mrs. Baxendale drove to the Athels. It was about luncheon-time. She inquired for Wilfrid, and heard with mingled feelings that he was at home. She found him in his study; he had before him a little heap of letters, the contents of a packet he had found on his table on entering a quarter of an hour before.

Mrs. Baxendale regarded him observantly. The results of her examination led her to come to the point at once.

'I have just left Beatrice,' she said. 'She has been telling me an extraordinary story. Do you know what it was?'

'She has told you the truth,' Wilfrid replied, simply.

'And you were married this morning?'

Wilfrid bent his head in assent.

Mrs. Baxendale seated herself.

'My dear Wilfrid,' were her next words, 'you have been guilty of what is commonly called a dishonourable action.'

'I fear I have. I can only excuse myself by begging you to

believe that no other course was open to me. I have simply cut a hard knot. It was better than wasting my own life and others' lives in despair at its hopelessness.'

Wilfrid was collected. The leap taken, he felt his foot once more on firm ground. He felt, too, that he had left behind him much of which he was heartily ashamed. He was in no mood to feign an aspect of contrition.

'You will admit,' observed the lady, 'that this cutting of the knot makes a rather harsh severance.'

'It would be impertinent to say that I am sorry for Beatrice. Her behaviour to me has been incredibly magnanimous, and I feel sure that her happiness as well as my own has been consulted. I don't know in what sense she has spoken to you——'

'Very nobly, be sure of it.'

'I can only thank her and reverence her.'

Mrs. Baxendale remained for a moment in thought.

'Well,' she resumed, 'you know that it is not my part to make useless scenes. I began with my hardest words, and they must stand. Beatrice will not die of a broken heart, happily, and if your wife is one half as noble you are indeed a fortunate man. Perhaps we had better talk no more at present; it is possible you have acted rightly, and I must run no risk of saying unkind things. Is your father informed?'

'Not yet.'

'You are leaving town?'

'This afternoon.'

'To go to a distance?'

'No. I shall be in town daily.'

'You doubtless inform your father before you leave?'

'I shall do so.'

'Then we will say good-bye.'

Mrs. Baxendale gave her hand. She did not smile, but just shook her head as she looked Wilfrid steadily in the face.

It was later in the afternoon when she called upon Mrs. Birks. She was conducted to that lady's boudoir, and there found Mr. Athel senior in colloquy with his sister. The subject of the conversation was unmistakable.

'You know?' asked Mrs. Birks, with resignation, as soon as the door was closed behind the visitor.

'I have come to talk it over with you.'

Mr. Athel was standing with his hands clasped behind him;

he was rather redder in the face than usual, and had clearly been delivering himself of ample periods.

'Really, Mrs. Baxendale,' he began, 'I have a difficulty in expressing myself on the subject. The affair is simply monstrous. It indicates a form of insanity. I—uh—I—uh—in truth I don't know from what point to look at it.'

'Where is Beatrice?' Mrs. Birks asked.

'She will stay with me for a day or two,' replied Mrs. Baxendale.

'How—how is she?' inquired Mr. Athel, sympathetically.

'Upset, of course, but not seriously, I hope.'

'Really,' Mrs. Birks exclaimed, 'Wilfrid might have had some consideration for other people. Here are the friendships of a lifetime broken up on his account.'

'I don't know that that is exactly the point of view,' remarked her brother, judicially. 'One doesn't expect such things to seriously weigh—I mean, of course, when there is reason on the man's side. What distresses me is the personal recklessness of the step.'

'Perhaps that is not so great as it appears,' put in Mrs. Baxendale, quietly.

'You defend him?' exclaimed Mrs. Birks.

'I'm not sure that I should do so, but I want to explain how Beatrice regards it.'

'*She* defends him?' cried Mr. Athel.

'Yes, she does. At present there is only one thing I fear for her, and that is a refusal on your part to carry out her wishes. Beatrice has made up her mind that as little trouble as possible shall result. I bring, in fact, the most urgent request from her that you, Mr. Athel, and you, Mrs. Birks, will join in a sort of conspiracy to make things smooth for Wilfrid. She desires—it is no mere whim, I believe her health depends upon it—that no obstacle whatever may be put in the way of Wilfrid's return to society with his wife. We are to act as though their engagement had come to an end by mutual agreement, and as approving the marriage. This is my niece's serious desire.'

'My dear Mrs. Baxendale!' murmured the listening lady. 'How very extraordinary! Are you quite sure——'

'Oh, this surely is out of the question,' broke in her brother. 'That Beatrice should make such a request is very admirable, but I—uh—I really——'

Mr. Athel paused, as if expecting and hoping that someone would defeat his objections.

'I admit it sounds rather unreal,' pursued Mrs. Baxendale, 'but fortunately I can give you good evidence of her sincerity. She has visited the lady who is now Mrs. Athel, and that with the express purpose of representing herself as nothing more than a friend of Wilfrid's. You remember she had a slight acquaintance with Miss Hood. After this I don't see how we can refuse to aid her plan.'

'She visited Miss Hood?' asked Mrs. Birks, with the mild amazement of a lady who respects her emotions. 'Does Wilfrid know that?'

'Beatrice asked his permission to go.'

'This is altogether beyond me,' confessed Mr. Athel, drawing down his waistcoat and taking a turn across the room. 'Of course, if they have been amusing themselves with a kind of game, well, we have nothing to do but to regret that our invitation to join in it has come rather late. For my own part, I was disposed to take a somewhat more serious view. Of course it's no good throwing away one's indignation. I—uh—but what is your own attitude with regard to this proposal, Mrs. Baxendale?'

'I think I must be content to do my niece's bidding,' said the lady addressed.

'There's one thing, it seems to me, being lost sight of,' came from Mrs. Birks, in the disinterested tone of a person who wishes to deliver with all clearness an unpleasant suggestion. 'We are very much in the dark as to Miss Hood's—I should say Mrs. Athel's—antecedents. You yourself,' she regarded Mrs. Baxendale, 'confess that her story is very mysterious. If we are asked to receive her, really—doesn't this occur to you?'

At this moment the door opened and amid general silence Beatrice came forward. Mrs. Birks rose quickly and met her. Mrs. Baxendale understood at a glance what had brought her niece here. Agitation had grown insupportable. It was not in Beatrice's character to lie still whilst others decided matters in which she had supreme interest. The more difficult her position the stronger she found herself to support it. The culmination of the drama could not be acted with her behind the scenes.

Mrs. Birks, with a whispered word or two, led her to a seat. Beatrice looked at her aunt, then at Mr. Athel. The proud beauty

of her face was never more impressive. She smiled as if some pleasant trifle were under discussion.

'I heard your voice as I came in,' she said to Mrs. Birks, bending towards her gracefully. 'Were you on my side?'

'I'm afraid not, dear, just then,' was the reply, given in a corresponding tone of affectionateness.

'You will tell me what you were saying?'

Mr. Athel looked as uncomfortable as even an English gentleman can in such a situation. Mrs. Baxendale seemed to be finding amusement in observing him. The lady appealed to plucked for a moment at her sleeve.

'May I make a guess?' Beatrice pursued. 'It had something to do with the private circumstances of the lady Mr. Wilfrid Athel has married?'

'Yes, Beatrice, it had.'

'Then let me help you over that obstacle, dear Mrs. Birks. I have heard from herself a full explanation of what you are uneasy about, and if I were at liberty to repeat it you would know that she has been dreadfully unhappy and has endured things which would have killed most women, all because of her loyalty and purity of heart. I think I may ask you to give as much effect to my words as if you knew everything. Mrs. Athel is in every respect worthy to become a member of your family.'

Her voice began to express emotion.

'Mr. Athel, *you* are not against me? It is so hard to find no sympathy. I have set my heart on this. Perhaps I seem to ask a great deal, but I—have I not some little——'

'My dear Miss Redwing,' broke in Mr. Athel; then, correcting himself, 'My dear Beatrice, no words could convey the anxiety I feel to be of service to you. You see how difficult it is for me to speak decidedly, but I assure you that I could not possibly act in opposition to your expressed desire. Perhaps it would be better for me to withdraw. I am sure these ladies——'

His speech hung in mid-air, and he stood nervously tapping his fingers with his eyeglass.

'No, please remain,' exclaimed Beatrice. 'Aunt, you are not against me? Mrs. Birks, you won't refuse to believe what I have told you?'

The two ladies glanced at each other. In Mrs. Baxendale's look there was appeal.

'Indeed, I believe you implicitly, my dear Beatrice,' said Mrs.

Birks. 'My brother is the one to decide. You are mistaken in thinking I oppose your wish. How could I?'

The last words were very sweetly said. With a smile which did not pass beyond her lips, Beatrice rose from her seat and held her hand to Mr. Athel.

'Then it is understood? When Wilfrid brings his wife to you, you receive her with all kindness. I have your promise?'

Mr. Athel drew himself up very straight, pressed the offered hand and said,—

'It shall be as you wish.'

Beatrice returned with Mrs. Baxendale. Her desire to be alone was respected during the rest of the day. Going to her the last thing at night, her aunt was reassured; weariness had followed upon nervous strain, and the beautiful eyes seemed longing for sleep.

But in the morning appearances were not so hopeful. The night had after all been a troubled one; Beatrice declined breakfast and, having dressed with effort, lay on a sofa, her eyes closed.

At noon Mrs. Baxendale came near and said gently,—

'Dear, you are not going to be ill?'

The sufferer stirred a little, looked in her aunt's face, rose to a sitting position.

'Ill?' She laughed in a forced way. 'O, that would never do! Ill after all? Why, that would spoil everything. Are you going out this morning?'

'Certainly not. I should only have done some idle shopping.'

'Then you shall do the shopping, and I will go with you. Yes, yes, I will go! It is the only way. Let us go where we shall see people; I wish to. I will be ready in five minutes.'

'But, Beatrice—'

'O, don't fear my looks; you shall see if I betray myself! Quick, quick,—to Regent Street, Bond Street, where we shall see people! I shall be ready before you.'

They set forth, and Beatrice had no illness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MID-DAY.

ONCE more at The Firs. Wilfrid had decided to make this his abode. It was near enough to London to allow of his going backwards and forwards as often as might be necessary; his father's town house offered the means of change for Emily, and supplied him with a *pied-à-terre* in time of session. By limiting his attendance at the House as far as decency would allow, he was able to enjoy with small interruption the quiet of his home in Surrey, and a growing certainty that the life of the present Parliament would be short encouraged him in looking forward to the day when politics would no longer exist for him.

He and Emily established themselves at The Firs towards the end of December, having spent a week with Mr. Athel on their return from the Continent. Emily's health had improved, but there was no likelihood that she would ever be other than a delicate flower, to be jealously guarded from the sky's ruder breath by him to whom she was a life within life. Ambition as he formerly understood it had no more meaning for Wilfrid; the fine ardour of his being rejected grosser nourishment and burned in altar-flame towards the passion-pale woman whom he after all called wife. Emily was an unfailing inspiration; by her side the nobler zeal of his youth renewed itself; in the light of her pure soul he saw the world as poetry and strove for that detachment of the intellect which in Emily was a gift of nature.

She, Emily—Emily Athel, as she joyed to write herself,—moved in her new sphere like a spirit humbled by victory over fate. It was a mild winter; the Surrey hills were tender against the brief daylight, and gardens breathed the freshness of evergreens. When the sun trembled over the landscape for a short hour, Emily loved to stray as far as that hollow on the heath where she had sat with Wilfrid years ago, and heard him for the first time speak freely of his aims and his hopes. That spot was sacred; as she stood there beneath the faint blue of the winter sky, all the exquisite sadness of life, the memory of those whom death had led to his kindly haven, the sorrows of new-born love, the dear heart-ache for woe passed into eternity, touched the deepest fountains of her nature and made dim her eyes. She would not have had life

other than it was given to her, for she had learned the secrets of infinite passion in the sunless valleys of despair.

She rested. In the last few months she had traversed a whole existence; repose was needful that she might assimilate all her new experiences and range in due order the gifts which joy had lavishly heaped upon her. The skies of the south, the murmur of blue seas on shores of glorious name, the shrines of Art, the hallowed scenes where earth's greatest have loved and wrought—these were no longer a dream; with her bodily eyes she had looked upon Greece and Italy, and to have done so was a consecration, it cast a light upon her brows. 'Talk to me of Rome:' those were always her words when Wilfrid came to her side in the evening. 'Talk to me of Rome, as you alone can.' And as Wilfrid recalled their life in the world's holy of holies, she closed her eyes for the full rapture of the inner light, and her heart sang praise.

Wilfrid was awed by his blessedness. There were times when he scarcely dared to take in his own that fine-moulded hand which was the symbol of life made perfect; Emily uttered thoughts which made him fear to profane her purity by his touch. She realised to the uttermost his ideal of womanhood, none the less so that it seemed no child would be born of her to trouble the exclusiveness of their love. He clad her in queenly garments and did homage at her feet. Her beauty was all for him, for though Emily could grace any scene she found no pleasure in society, and the hours of absence from home were to Wilfrid full of anxiety to return. All their plans were for solitude; life was too short for more than the inevitable concessions to the outside world.

But one morning in February, Emily's eye fell upon an announcement in the newspaper which excited in her a wish to go up to town. Among the list of singers at a concert to be given that day she had caught the name of Miss Beatrice Redwing. It was Saturday; Wilfrid had no occasion for leaving home, and already they had enjoyed in advance the two unbroken days.

'But I should indeed like to hear her,' Emily said, 'and she seems to sing so rarely.'

'She has only just returned to England,' Wilfrid remarked.

They had heard of Beatrice having been in Florence a week or two prior to their own stay there. She was travelling with the Baxendales. Emily was anxious to meet her, and Wilfrid had

held out a hope that this might come about in Italy, but circumstances had proved adverse.

‘Have you seen her?’ Emily inquired.

Her husband had not. He seemed at first a little disinclined to go up for the concert, but on Emily’s becoming silent he hastened to give a cheerful acquiescence.

‘Couldn’t we see her to-morrow?’ she went on to ask.

‘No doubt we can. It’s only the facing of my aunt’s drawing-room on a Sunday afternoon.’

‘O, surely that is needless, Wilfrid? Couldn’t we go and see her quietly? She would be at home in the morning, I should think.’

‘I should think so. We’ll make inquiries to-night.’

They left home early in the afternoon and procured tickets on their way from the station to Mr. Athel’s. Their arrival being quite unexpected, they found that Mr. Athel had left town for a day or two. It was all that Emily needed for the completing of her pleasure; her father-in-law was scrupulously polite in his behaviour to her, but the politeness fell a little short as yet of entire ease, and conversation with him involved effort. She ran a risk of letting Wilfrid perceive the gladness with which she discovered an empty house; he did, in fact, attribute to its true cause the light-heartedness she showed as they sat together at dinner, and smiled to think that he himself shared in the feeling of relief. There were reasons why he could not look forward to the evening with unalloyed happiness, but the unwonted gaiety which shone on Emily’s face and gave a new melody to her voice, moved him to tenderness and gratitude. He felt that it would be well to listen again to the music of that strong heart whose pain had been his bliss. He overcame ignoble anxieties and went to the concert as to a sacred office.

Their seats, owing to lateness in applying for them, were not in the best part of the hall; immediately behind them was the first row of a cheaper section, and two men of indifferent behaviour were seated there within ear-shot; they were discussing the various names upon the programme as if for the enlightenment of their neighbours. When Emily had been sitting for a few minutes, she found that it had been unwise to leave her mantle in the cloak-room; there was a bad draught. Wilfrid went to recover it. Whilst waiting, Emily became aware that the men behind her were talking of Miss Redwing; she listened.

‘She’s married, I think, eh?’ said one.

'Was to have been, you mean. Why, wasn't it you told me the story? Oh no, it was Drummond. Drummond knows her people, I think.'

'What story, eh?'

'Why, she was to have married a Member of Parliament; what the deuce was his name? Something that reminded me of a race-horse, I remember. Was it Blair? No—Athol! That's the name.'

'Why didn't it come off, then?'

'Oh, the honourable member found somebody he liked better.'

It was not the end of the conversation, but just then the conductor rose in his place and there was 'hushing.' Wilfrid returned at the same moment. He noticed that Emily shivered as he put the covering on her shoulders. When he was seated she looked at him so strangely that he asked her in a whisper what was the matter. Emily shook her head and seemed to fix her attention on the music.

Beatrice Redwing was the third singer to come forward. Whilst she sang Emily frequently looked at her husband. Wilfrid did not notice it, he was absorbed in listening. Towards the end Emily, too, lost thought of everything save the magic with which the air was charged. There was vociferous demand for an encore, and Beatrice gave another song.

When the mid-way interval was reached Emily asked her husband if he would leave the hall. She gave no reason and Wilfrid did not question her. When they were in the carriage she said the draught had been too severe. Wilfrid kept silence; he was troubled by inexplicable misgivings.

Servants hastened to light the drawing-room on their arrival earlier than was expected. Emily threw off her wraps and seated herself near the fire.

'Do you suffer from the chill?' Wilfrid asked, approaching her as if with diffidence.

She turned her face to him, gazing with the sadness which was so much more natural to her than the joy of two hours ago.

'It was not the draught that made me come away,' she said with gentle directness. 'I must tell you what it was, Wilfrid. I cannot keep any of my thoughts from you.'

'Tell me,' he murmured, standing by her.

She related the substance of the conversation she had overheard, always keeping her eyes on him.

'Is it true?'

'It is true, Emily.'

Between him and her there could be no paltry embarrassments. A direct question touching both so deeply could be answered only in one way. If Emily had suffered from a brief distrust, his look and voice, sorrowful but frank as though he faced Omniscience, restored her courage at once. There might be grief henceforth, but it was shared between them.

He spoke on and made all plain. Then at the last,—

'I felt it to be almost impossible that you should not some day know. I could not tell you, perhaps on her account as much as on my own. But now I may say what I had no words for before. She loved me and I believed that I could return her love. When I met you, how could I marry her? A stranger sees my conduct—you have heard how. It is you who alone can judge me.'

'And she came to me in that way,' Emily murmured. 'She could not only lose *you*, but give her hand to the woman who robbed her?'

'And take my part with everyone, force herself to show a bright face, do her best to have it understood that it was she herself who broke off the marriage—all this.'

'Dare I go to her, Wilfrid? Would it be cruel to go to her? I wish to speak—oh, not one word that would betray my knowledge, but to say that I love her. Do you think I may go?'

'I cannot advise you, Emily. Wait until the morning and do then what you think best.'

She decided to go. Beatrice still lived with Mrs. Birks, and it was probable that she would be alone on Sunday morning. It proved to be so.

Wilfrid waited more than an hour for Emily's return. When at length she entered to him, he saw that there was deep content on her countenance. Emily embraced her husband and laid her head upon his breast. He could hear her sigh gently.

'She wishes to see you, Wilfrid.'

'She received you kindly?'

'I will tell you all when I have had time to think of it. But she was sorry you did not come with me. Will you go? She will be alone this afternoon.'

They held each other in silence. Then Emily, raising an awed face, asked softly,—

'Where does she find her strength? Is her nature so spotless that self-sacrifice is her highest joy? Wilfrid, I could have asked pardon at her feet; my heart bled for her.'

'Dearest, you least of all should wonder at the strength which comes of high motive.'

'Oh, but to surrender you to another and to witness that other's happiness! Was not my self-denial perhaps a form of selfishness? I only shrank from love because I dreaded the reproaches of my own heart; I did good to no one, was only anxious to save myself. She—I dare not think of it! My nature is so weak. Take your love from me and you take my life.'

Wilfrid's heart leaped with the wild joy of a mountain torrent.

'She will not always be alone,' he said, perhaps with the readiness of the supremely happy to prophesy smooth things for all. There came the answer of gentle reproach,—

'After loving you, Wilfrid?'

'Beautiful, that is how it seems to you. There is second love, often truer than the first.'

'Then the first was not love indeed! If I had never seen you again, what meaning would love have ever had for me apart from your name? I only dreamed of it till I knew you, then it was love first and last. Wilfrid, my own, my husband—my love till I die!'

THE END.

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